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Timor-Leste's Country Statement

J. Ramos-Horta,
President of Timor-Leste,
1996 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate,
at the High-Level Segment
2nd December 2028

Your Majesties,
Your Highnesses,
Your Excellencies,

First and foremost I warmly congratulate His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan for his inspiring leadership and generosity in contributing 100 million dollars to the loss and damage fund for those who are at the forefront of the impact of climate change. This is a testament that the UAE is the home of Human Fraternity.

We welcome the historic decision just taken to operationalise the loss and damage fund, and appreciate the financial pledges that have already been made. We trust that these will be new and additional to existing climate finance and other

development assistance. Of course, a vast gap still remains, and it is our people that will continue to shoulder the greatest costs of climate change.

We urge the developed country parties to provide sustainable financial inputs to this fund. This fund must be accountable to the COP and CMA with a credible board and independent secretariat.

I want to commend and voice my appreciation for the technical team of my country, Timor-Leste, under the leadership of Ambassador Adão Barbosa as one of the Transitional Committee members to the funding arrangements and fund for addressing loss and damage and tirelessly working towards the realization of this fund in the interest of the most vulnerable countries.

The latest IPCC report echoes a sobering reality: human-induced greenhouse gas emissions have driven global warming by 1.1°C since 1850.

I urge WHO to declare a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, the highest level of emergency that can be declared by WHO.

Failure to act NOW to curtail greenhouse emissions will unleash extreme events amplifying many times over the specter of future losses and damages.

LDCs and SIDS are the most affected due to limited financial, technological and human capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change even though we are minute CO2 emitters.

Timor-Leste experiences multiple climate change impacts, floods, droughts, landslides, and sea level rise. This leads to decrease in agriculture output, increase food insecurity, water shortage, destruction of infrastructure, loss of human life, displacement, limited financial and technological capacity to quickly recover and rebuild loss and damage.

Developed countries parties must show the lead in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions and other major emitting countries to do so, in order to achieve net-zero emission by 2050.

Developed country parties must lead in providing finance, technology and capacity building support for developing countries enabling adaptation and mitigation actions.

We need to define climate finance as new and additional to a revised, increased ODA to at least 0,7% of GDP, without cumbersome inflated bureaucracy procedures.

In addition, there has to be a global debt right off for LDCs, SIDS and in particular the g7+ Fragile States.

Can we try to be a little honest and recognise that economic recovery from Covid-19 pandemic, Ukraine war, and climate catastrophes, while saddled with massive debts caused by sharks loans from multilateral lending institutions and commercial banks, is an impossibility?

We call for an urgent energy transition from fossil fuel-based to renewable energy in the most emitting countries in order to enable us to achieve net-zero emission by 2050.

In addition, we must provide political guidance to the existing negotiation on a new collective quantified goal in order to define a new financial contribution from the developed country parties to developing countries with a quantum of USD 200 billion annually by 2025 to 2030 focussed on adaptation, mitigation and loss and damage.

Timor-Leste's oceans boast exceptional biodiversity, extensive fisheries and the healthiest coral reefs in the region. Twenty-four species of whales and dolphins frequent our waters, which is among the highest recorded number of cetaceans anywhere in the world. Our waters contain the largest creature ever to have lived on planet Earth - the mighty blue whale.

However, our nation's marine life is being plundered by illegal fishing and faces a very grave threat from plastic pollution. We have taken measures to strengthen legislation to protect our marine biodiversity.

We echo the statement of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Target 3, to conserve at least 30% of the planet by the year 2030 by taking urgent and concrete action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss on our land and in our sea.

We, the President and the Government, led by our Founding Father Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão, are determined to protect our Exclusive Economic Zones; against predatory commercial activities the Northern EEZ will be "No Take Zones" by 2025.

Traditional fishing activities by coastal communities will be adequately supported to improve their livelihood.

We have formulated a National Adaptation Plan (NAP), National Adaptation Program of Actions (NAPAs) and revised the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs) as required by the UNFCCC, with various adaptation priorities for the short, medium and long term actions, including agriculture and food security, fresh water, infrastructure, and health.

In this regard, we call on developed country parties to provide financial support for the full implementation of our key adaptation priorities under the NAP in order to increase our resilience.

On mitigation, Timor-Leste is fully engaged to have a low carbon development path with priorities given to renewable energy and reforestation.

In fact, the government has been implementing renewable energy technologies including solar power for rural communities living away from the national electricity line.

We have conserved our native vegetation in our national parks, such as the Nino Konis Santana National Park. We are

expanding reforestation activities by providing economic incentives to the rural communities.

Some National NGOs are at the forefront of our strategy to repair the damages inflicted on Mother Earth.

NGO PERMATIL has been actively undertaking water source conservation and recovery activities rehabilitating natural dams in upper areas for increasing rainwater infiltration into the soil.

NGOs - "WITH ONE SEED" and TIMOR CARBON OFFSET FOUNDATION - are expanding successful tree planting programs across the country.

Carbon credit certificates sold in the carbon credit market bring significant return for participating communities.

We will do much more if we receive adequate support free of stifling bureaucracy.

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