



Assembly
Item 3

General Debate

Enhancing good governance and empowering communities through inclusivity, trust and opportunities for all

Intervention by the Parliamentary Delegation of Timor-Leste by Mrs. CEDELIZIA FARIA DOS SANTOS

Honourable Chairperson of the Assembly,
Distinguished Fellow Parliamentarians,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the parliamentary delegation of Timor-Leste, I begin by expressing our gratitude for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to us here in Arusha, Tanzania, under the leadership of Her Excellency the President of the Republic, Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan. It is an honour to participate in this Assembly and to acknowledge the dedicated work and spirit of dialogue that have characterized the presidency of Dr. Tulia Ackson - a mandate that has strengthened parliamentary diplomacy and highlighted the value of women's leadership within the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

In Timor-Leste, the National Parliament has consistently exercised its legislative, budgetary, and oversight functions. In this context, we support the strengthening of the Anti-Corruption Commission, mandatory asset declarations for public officials, and Public Administration reforms guided by the principles of transparency, meritocracy, and accountability.

The General State Budgets for the past three years were approved in a timely manner, following comprehensive public hearings and debates in both general and specific committees. The Budgetary Transparency Portal, updated daily, allows Parliament and citizens to monitor expenditure execution in real time. Furthermore, oversight goes beyond mere document analysis; it includes field visits by committees and the review of the General State Accounts, ensuring that public resources have a tangible impact on people's lives.

These mechanisms thus contribute to combating impunity, rectifying irregularities, modernizing financial and administrative management, and gradually strengthening citizens' trust in State institutions.

Empowering communities necessarily entails bringing the State closer to the people and ensuring their effective participation. Timor-Leste maintains one of the highest rates of female representation in the region, with women making up approximately 37% of Parliament.

At the same time, administrative decentralization has progressed through the gradual establishment of "One-Stop Shops" in municipalities - facilities that bring essential services together in a single location, thereby reducing travel time, cutting costs, and minimizing bureaucracy, particularly for rural populations.

By fostering dialogue with civil society, traditional leaders, and the academic community, Parliament strengthens the sense of belonging and local participation. We work to ensure that the General State Budget and laws address the real needs of communities, prioritizing women, youth, persons with disabilities, and the most vulnerable groups.

The introduction of climate budget markers is a concrete example of this approach, enabling the identification, classification, and tracking of expenditures integrated into mitigation, adaptation, and the sustainable management of natural resources. We consider the response to climate change as an essential dimension of good governance. Consequently, Parliament monitors the environmental policies adopted by the Government, ensuring that climate action translates into effective protection for populations and their livelihoods.

In the realm of new technologies, strategic initiatives such as "Dalan ba Digital" and the digitization of the judicial system significantly expand access to information and quality public services.

The commencement of commercial operations of the first international submarine fiber-optic cable marks a historic milestone for the country's digital sovereignty, driving e-government and the modernization of public administration. Additionally, the expansion of connectivity in the sucos (villages) aims to optimize local governance efficiency, bringing public services closer to citizens through community digital centres. Concurrently, legislation regarding data protection and cybersecurity is currently being drafted.

In this regard, the National Parliament assumes the institutional commitment to ensure that the digital transformation is guided by principles of transparency, inclusion, security, and democratic scrutiny.

At the regional and international levels, Timor-Leste shares these experiences within the CPLP, ASEAN, the g7+, and the IPU, reaffirming its commitment to SDG 16 and the 2030 Agenda. Accession to the World Trade Organization and active participation in the United Nations further reinforce our commitment to multilateral cooperation and the consolidation of a rules-based international system.

Parliaments indeed play a decisive role in translating commitments into concrete results in people's lives.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good governance is not achieved overnight: it is a daily construction built upon inclusion, trust, and real opportunities for all. Timor-Leste reiterates its commitment to this path and values the opportunity to learn from and collaborate with all the parliaments represented here. Let us work together for a resilient future, focused on collective progress and the strengthening of our communities.

Thank you very much.