



**Talking points by Bilal Aurang Zeb Durrani,
Country Representative of UNICEF in Timor-Leste**

**Validation Workshop on Draft Options Paper for
Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in the Education Sector**

**Dili, 30 January 2023
Suai Room, Timor-Plaza**

- H.E. Minister of Education Youth and Sport, Dr. Armino Maia
- Directors general, national directors and all Ministry staff, Education Municipalities directors and teachers
- Development partners/NGOs/ING, Organization for People with Disabilities
- Director Plan International and Regional advisors
- Other UN agencies and UNICEF colleagues
- Media colleagues

Bom dia/good morning all,

1. I am particularly pleased to be a part of this validation workshop on the Draft Options Paper for Disaster Risk Management related to dealing with emergencies in the education sector in Timor-Leste.
2. The Options Paper before us today, which was developed during previous months of review and discussions with a wide range of specialists and practitioners in Timor-Leste, and the workshop today, provide us with an opportunity to critically look at the options

available, deep-dive into some discussions, pick through details, and provide the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Government of Timor-Leste and all education partners concrete actions and options on ensuring minimum impact from disasters on the education sector, and children's learning.

3. *This workshop and opportunity come at a critical time for us, the world, and students in Timor-Leste – as we together, help reimagine a better world, education systems and options for learning by children in the country.*
4. As we know from recent experience, disasters can take many forms: man-made or natural disasters. The options paper touches on these, but as we know, the two most significant of these in recent times have been the cyclone and floods in 2021, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Strong winds and rains have also damaged schools and disrupted learning to a lesser extent.
5. But we have also learnt from these emergencies and our response actions, including the reduction of impact from natural disasters, establishment of systems to reduce the impact on continued learning, and from pilot DRM initiatives such as that supported by UNICEF in 4 municipalities with Plan International, and a number of other actions taken by many of you and your organizations.
6. As we know, natural disasters and other emergencies can happen at any time.
7. Landslides and flash floods are the most frequent hazards in the country. Risks and incidents have increased in the past few years. According to the National Disaster Risk Management Directorate (NDRMD), there have been at least 185 floods since 2010, compared to 32 floods between 2001 and 2009.
8. And today, it is expected that you all look at possible scenarios, the proposals in the options paper under four themes, and provide options to the MOEYS and its partners to adopt and reduce the impact of disasters on education and children's learning. Its also imperative that these are aligned with global guidelines, the SENDAI framework and Comprehensive School Safety framework.
9. While disaster risk management cannot prevent disasters from occurring, such frameworks are necessary to reduce their impact by understanding causal factors and managing risks. A solid disaster risk management plan can help save lives, minimize panic, protect resources (equipment, infrastructure) and ensure schools and learning can resume normal operations as soon as possible after a disaster.
10. Your Excellency, Hon. Armindo Maia, Minister of Education, Youth and Sport, your presence here today is a testament to your personal commitment to ensuring every Timorese child enjoys their right to education. I also thank the National Directorate of School Social Action and Sanitation for your leadership and coordination support

throughout the process.

11. I also would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ministry staff, UNICEF and Plan International staff, including from our respective regional offices, and all partners for your contributions to this Draft Options Paper.
12. Before I end, I would like to reiterate UNICEF's commitment to continuing to support the Government and Ministry of Education Youth and Sport and all partners to reimagine a better future for the children of Timor-Leste, so they can enjoy their full rights to education in a safe and secure environment and thrive.
13. Obrigado barak.

