

Draft remarks prepared for Ainhoa Jaureguibeitia, UNICEF Deputy Representative, Programmes
On the occasion of the Training on strengthening institution's capacity for misinformation response
in Timor-Leste 9 – 13 October 2023



Salutations

- Director General of Primary Health Care, Ministry of Health
- Director General of INSPTL
- Representative from USAID
- Representative from DFAT
- Representative from UNICEF HQ and Regional Office
- Colleagues from health partners
- Dear participants of Infodemic management training

Bomdia!

I wish to start by congratulating the Government of Timor-Leste, through the leadership of the Ministry of Health, and the National Public Health Institute for organising this first-ever training on strengthening the Ministry of Health's capacity for misinformation in Timor-Leste.

Ha'u hakarak hahú hodi kongratula Governu Timor-Leste liuhusi lideransa Ministeriu Saúde nian, no Institutu Nasional Saúde Pública hodi organiza treinamentu dahuluk kona-ba reforsu kapasidade Ministériu Saúde kona-ba Desinformasaun iha Timor-Leste.

When COVID-19 was declared a pandemic globally in March 2020, Governments across the world worked closely with stakeholders including United Nations Agencies and Civil Society Organisations, to find solutions to successfully contain the crisis.

Bainhira COVID-19 deklara nu'udar pandemia globál iha fulan Marsu 2020, Governu sira iha mundu tomak servisu hamutuk ho parte interesada sira inklui Ajensia Nasoins Unidas no Organizasaun Sociedade Sivil sira, hodi buka solusoins atu bele kontrola krize ne'e ho susesu.

While a range of important response measures were being put in place to stop the spread of the virus and to save the lives of those with the virus, the world found itself faced with a different kind of a problem – Infodemic.

Iha tempu ne'ebá, iha mós medida importante oioin atu hapara virus ne'e no atu salva ema sira ne'ebé moras ne'e nia moris, maibé mundu hasoru problema oioin – mak Infodemia.

The World Health Organization explains an infodemic as too much information circulating during a disease outbreak, including false or misleading information in digital and physical environments.

Organizasaun Mundial Saúde esplika Infodemia ida tan informasaun barak liu mak sirkula durante surtu moras ida mosu, inklui informasaun falsu ka la loos iha ambiente dijital no fiziku.

Yes, it is a normal inclination of people to turn to different sources of information in search of answers, especially when the disease that is spreading is new. Sadly, some of the platforms used to access information generate false and alarming information which often triggers a lot of fears, confusion, and panic among people. In addition, an infodemic can results risk-taking and harmful behaviours among people.

Sin, ne'e normal kuandu ema hakarak buka informasaun oioin hodi hetan resposta, liuliu bainhira moras ne'ebé habelar daudauk mak moras foun ida. Susar tebes, plataforma balun ne'ebé uza atu asesu ba informasaun hamosu informasaun falsu no avizu ne'ebé dala barak hamosu ta'uk, konfuzaun, no ta'uk iha ema nia leet. Aleinde ne'e, infodemia ida bele rezulta hahalok-aat no risku entre ema.

In Timor-Leste, the fears created from misinformation, hugely contributed to declines in the number of people accessing essential health services like maternal and child health services, immunisation services, family planning services and treatment for malnutrition.

Iha Timor-Leste, ta'uk ne'ebé kria husi informasaun ne'ebé la loos ka desinformasaun, kontribui maka'as ba númeru tun kona-ba ema ne'ebé asesu ba servisu saúde esensial sira hanesan servisu saúde inan no labarik, servisu imunizasaun, servisu planeamentu familiár no tratamentu ba malnutrisaun.

Gains in maternal and child health can be reversed if people do not receive accurate information, which will give them confidence to continue positive health seeking behaviours even during the times of the pandemic. It is for this reason that many countries have built infodemic management capacities during the COVID-19 pandemic, which today are being applied it to monitoring and addressing infodemic harms related to other outbreaks.

Lukru iha saúde inan no oan bele troka se ema la simu informasaun ne'ebé loos, ne'ebé sei fó konfiansa ba sira atu kontinua hahalok buka saúde pozitivu maske durante tempu pandemia. Ba razaun ne'e mak nasaun barak harii ona kapasidade jestaun infodemia durante pandemia COVID-19, ne'ebé ohin loron uja hodi monitoriza no rezolve impaktu at husi infodemia relasiona ho surtu seluk.

As part of our efforts to mitigate misinformation in the country, Timor-Leste has the global initiative to address misinformation. This initiative was introduced in 2022, supported by UNICEF HQ in collaboration with Public Good Projects (PGP) using the Vaccine Demand Observatory (VDO) platform. This initiative led to the establishment of the Ministry of Health Management Taskforce.

Nu'udar parte ida husi ami-nia esforsu atu hamenus desinformasaun ka informasaun la loos iha nasaun ne'e, Timor-Leste iha iniciativa globál atu rezolve informasaun ne'ebé la loos. Iniciativa ne'e introdús iha tinan 2022, ho apoiu husi UNICEF HQ iha kolaborasaun ho Projetu Diak Publiku (PGP) uja plataforma Observatoriu ba Ezijensia ba Vasina (VDO). Iniciativa ida-ne'e rezulta estabesimentu Grupu Trabalho Jestaun iha Ministeriu Saude.

UNICEF is proud to support this training in Timor-Leste to build the capacity of the Ministry of Health at both the national and sub-national levels. This means that as a follow-up to this training, UNICEF will support training for the District Public Health Officer of Health Promotion, Expanded Program on Immunization managers, and focal points from municipal and community health centres. We estimate that more than 150 people will benefit from this training across the country.



UNICEF sente orgulhu atu apoia formasaun ne'e iha Timor-Leste hodi kapasita Ministériu Saúde iha nivel nasonál no sub-nasional. Ne'e signifika katak nu'udar akompañamentu ba treinamentu ne'e, UNICEF sei suporta treinamentu ba Oficial Saúde Pública Munisipal husi ekipa Promosaun Saude, gestor sira husi programa imunizasaun, no pontu fokál sira husi hospital munisipal no sentru saúde komunitária sira. Ami halo estimasaun katak ema liu 150 sei hetan benefísiu husi treinamentu ne'e iha nasaun laran tomak.

From this training, we hope that the Ministry of Health will be able to officially launch the misinformation taskforce so that they will work systematically and swiftly in response to any upcoming misinformation to avoid the misinformation spreading widely in the community and impacting people's decisions to take up health services.

Husi treinamentu ida-ne'e, ami espera katak Ministeriu Saúde sei bele oficialmente lansa Grupu Trabalho Desinformasaun atu nune'e sira sei serbisu sistematikamente no lalais atu responde ba desinformasaun ka informasaun la loos, hodi evita informasaun la loos naklekar iha comunidade nia let, no fó impaktu ba ema nia desizaun sira atu asumi servisu saúde.

In conclusion, I wish to extend my appreciation to the Ministry of Health and the National Public Health Institute, who have made great progress in enhancing institutional capacity for better health services for children and population across the country.

Ikusliu, ha'u hakarak hato'o ha'u-nia apresiasaun ba Ministeriu Saúde no Institutu Nasional Saúde Pública, ne'ebé halo ona progresu boot hodi hasa'e kapasidade institusionál ba servisu saúde ne'ebé di'ak liu ba labarik no populausaun sira iha nasaun ne'e nia laran tomak.

Special words of appreciation also go to USAID, and DFAT, who have continuously and consistently added financial and technical support towards improving the health status of the children and their communities in Timor-Leste.

Hakarak hato'o mós liafuan apresiasaun especial ba USAID, no DFAT, ne'ebé kontinua no konsistente aumenta ona apoiu finanseiru no tékniku hodi hadi'ak estatutu saúde labarik sira nian ho sira nia comunidade iha Timor-Leste.

And lastly, I would like to appreciate my colleagues from UNICEF HQ and the Regional Offices, who have worked hard to prepare for this training.

No ikus liu, ha'u hakarak apresia ha'u-nia kolega sira husi Sede UNICEF HQ no Gabinete Rejional sira, ne'ebé servisu maka'as ona hodi prepara treinamentu ne'e.



Thank you, **Obrigado.**