

**Remarks by Bilal Aurang Zeb Durrani: Country Representative, UNICEF Timor-Leste
On the occasion of the launch of the 4th Phase of the USAID Supported COVID-19 Prevention
Programme**

**Palacio das Cinzas, Ministry of Health
Dili, 9 November 2023**



My deepest respect and gratitude to:

- Your Excellency, Honourable Vice Minister of Health, Jose dos Reis Magno
- Ms. Ann Marie Yastishock, USAID Acting Mission Director
- MoH officials
- Colleagues from USAID and UNICEF
- Development partners and civil society organizations
- Friends from the media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Bom dia

Today, we are here to mark yet another milestone of a unique partnership of Ministry of Health, USAID, and UNICEF. This partnership started in 2020 at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, a time when collaborative and planned efforts were needed to save lives and halt the further spread of the pandemic.

Indeed, the COVID-19 Pandemic caught us all unprepared and its devastating impacts continue to be felt to this day.

I therefore start by sincerely appreciating the Ministry of Health in Timor-Leste for their bold leadership and clear guidance at that extremely difficult moment of our lives.

As custodian of the health and well-being of Timorese people, you provided the much-needed co-ordination with Development partners and led us all through the multiple learning curves which came with the pandemic.

I also acknowledge the US government and USAID for being one of the very first bi-lateral partners who promptly came forward at the early stage of the pandemic, to support Timor-Leste to design and execute a COVID-19 response, which I believe we all agree helped in minimizing the impact of the pandemic.

Through the partnership between the Ministry of Health, USAID and UNICEF critical interventions in community mobilisation, supply of life-saving supplies and commodities renovations of WASH facilities at health centres, contributed to the controlling the virus. These have been rolled out in different phases, with the phase 3 almost being concluded in December 2023.

The launch of the fourth phase will help in maintaining the momentum to prepare the country to face future challenges faced in the early days of a pandemic response. This includes building on our intensified community mobilization to get the whole population to be convinced on the importance of following key behaviours such as social distancing, wearing masks, hand hygiene and seeking quarantine and isolation services when not feeling well. This will build on the lessons from rolling out vaccination campaigns and helping the country to overcome the initial struggle of getting adequate number of vaccines as well as getting people to come forward to receive the vaccines.

Providing health facilities with Infection Prevention and Control support has been core to the COVID 19 campaign. The health system and the health workforce were pushed beyond the limits

as they faced the challenge of protecting themselves from infection, while ensuring that they remain available to provide regular health services. Our collaboration therefore has played a key role in providing lifesaving and personal protecting supplies to health staff at a time when the global supply chains were paralyzed and when global demand was excessive.

Our collaboration has also bridged critical gaps in water and sanitation, which are perennial problems faced at the Community Health Centers (CHCs). We are very proud that, by the end of this latest phase, WASH services have been improved in all the community health centers in 10 municipalities. This has immensely enhanced the quality of all health services provided by these CHCs.



As of today, we have overcome the major battle of halting the further transmission of COVID-19, thanks to the various interventions led by Government, including the activities linked to this programme.

The launch of this fourth phase of the programme is focused on further strengthening the country's infection prevention and control systems. During the ongoing phase 3 and also

upcoming phase 4 of the programme, our primary focus will be sustaining the gains from COVID-19 response while delivering routine health services. This will include:

- Ensuring continuation of COVID-19 booster doses and integration of COVID-19 vaccine into the routine immunisation programme.
- Keeping our awareness and vaccine promotion campaign at the same momentum.
- Supporting health professionals to maintain the equipment received during the COVID-19 response
- Replenishing consumables and personal protection equipment, which will require additional budgets and commitments.

During the whole programme period, both technical staff and senior management of Min of Health, USAID and UNICEF have been jointly visiting municipalities to monitor implementation as well as highlight critical messages. We will continue that during this new programme phase as well. Today's event is another great milestone in our joint programme implementation.

I extend my sincere thanks for all the staff involved in this unique programme from MoH, USAID and UNICEF. I wish you all the strength and success in implementing this last phase of the programme.



Thank you

=====

Tetun:

**Deskursu husi Bilal Aurang Zeb Durrani: Representante País UNICEF Timor-Leste
Iha okaziaun lansamentu Programa Prevensaun COVID-19 nian ba da-haat husi USAID nian.**

**Palacio das Cinzas, Ministeriu Saúde
Dili, 9 Novembru 2023**

Saudasoins

- Sua Exelensia Vise Munistru Saúde, José dos Reis Magno
- Señora Ann Marie Yastishock, Ms. Ann Marie Yastishock, Diretor Interinu Misaun
- Offisial senior hotu husi Ministeriu Saúde
- Kolega hotu husi USAID no UNICEF
- Parseiru dezvoltimentu no sosiedade civil
- Kolega sira husi midia
- Señora no Señor hotu

Ohin, ami iha ne'e atu marka marku ikus husi programa úniku ida-ne'ebé implementa liuhusi parseria di'ak hosi Ministeriu Saúde, USAID no UNICEF. Parseria ida-ne'e hahú iha tinan 2020 iha pandemia COVID-19 nia leten, iha tempu ne'ebé prezisa esforsu kolaborativu no planeadu atu salva moris no hapara tan pandemia ne'e nia habelar.

Tuir loloos, pandemia COVID-19 kaer ita hotu la hatene no nia impaktu sira kontinua sente to'o ohin loron.

Tanba ne'e ha'u hahú hodi apresia ho laran-moos Ministeriu Saúde iha Timor-Leste tanba sira-nia lideransa ho aten-barani no orientasaun klaru iha momentu ne'ebé susar tebes iha ita-nia moris. Nu'udar ema Timor-Leste nia saúde no moris-di'ak, ita-boot sira fó koordinasaun ne'ebé prezisa tebes ho parseiru dezvoltimentu sira no lidera ita hotu liu husi kurva aprendizajen oioin ne'ebé mai ho pandemia ne'e.

Ha'u mós rekoñese Governu Amerikanu no USAID nu'udar primeiru parseiru ida-ne'ebé mai kedas iha faze sedu pandemia nian, hodi suporta Timor-Leste hodi dezeña no ezejuta resposta COVID-19 nian, ne'ebé ha'u fiar katak ami hotu konkorda ajuda hodi minimiza impaktu pandemia nian.

Liu husi parseria entre Ministeriu Saúde, USAID no UNICEF intervensaun krítiku sira iha mobilizasaun komunitária, fornimentu suprimentu no sasán salva-vida sira no mós renovasaun ba instalasaun Bee, Saneamentu no Ijiene (BESI sigla Tetun) iha sentru saúde sira, kontribui ba kontrolu virus ne'e. Ida-ne'e hala'o tiha ona iha faze oin-oin, ho faze da-3 besik remata iha Dezembru 2023.

Lansamentu ba faze dahaat sei tulun atu mantein dinamika hodi prepara país ne'e hasoru dezafiu sira iha futuru sira ne'ebé hasoru iha inísiu resposta ba pandemia. Ida ne'e inklui harii mobilizasaun komunitária ne'ebé intensifika ona ajuda atu halo populasaun tomak fiar katak importante tebes atu halo tuir hahalok xave sira hanesan distánsia sosiál, uza maskara, ijiene liman no buka servisu kuarentena no izolasaun bainhira la sente di'ak. Projetu ne'e harii husi lisaun sira mak aprende ona hodi hala'o kampaña vasinasau no ajuda nasaun atu halakon luta inisiál hodi hetan vasina ne'ebé adekua no mós atu hetan ema ne'ebé mai hodi simu vasina.

Fornese facilidade saúde ho fornimentu prevensaun no kontrolu apoiu ba infesaun mós sai nu'udar xave ba kampaña COVID 19. Sistema saúde no forsa servisu saúde nian dudu ona liu husi limitasaun sira tanba sira hasoru dezafiu atu proteje sira-nia an husi infesaun, no asegura katak sira nafatin disponivel atu fornese servisu saúde regulár. Ami nia kolaborasaun ida-ne'e hala'o papél importante ida hodi fornese sasán sira ne'ebé salva moris no Suprimentu protesau pesoál ba pesoál saúde sira iha tempu ne'ebé kadeia fornimentu globál paralizadu no bainhira nesesidade globál ne'e aas liu.

Programa ida-ne'e mós liga ho lakuna krítiku sira iha bee no saneamentu, ne'ebé sai hanesan problema perenniál ne'ebé hasoru iha Sentru Saúde Komunitaria. Ami kontente tebes tanba, to'o faze ida-ne'e nia rohan, servisu Bee, Ijiene no Saneamentu (BESI) melloradu ona iha sentru saúde komunitária hotu-hotu iha munisípiu 10. Ida ne'e hadi'a tebes kualidade servisu saúde hotu-hotu ne'ebé fornese husi Sentru Saúde Komunitaria hirak-ne'e.

To'o ohin lora, ami halakon tiha ona funu boot atu hapara tan transmisaun COVID-19, obrigadu ba intervensaun oioin ne'ebé Governu lidera, inklui atividade sira ne'ebé liga ho programa ida-ne'e.

Lansamentu ba faze dahaat programa ne'e nian foka liu ba reforsu liután sistema prevensaun no kontrolu ba infesaun iha nasaun ne'e. Durante faze da-3 no mós iha faze da-4 husi programa ne'e, ita-nia fokus prinsipál mak atu sustenta lukru sira husi resposta COVID-19 durante prestasaun servisu saúde rutina. Ida-ne'e sei inklui:

- Asegura kontinuasaun doze no integrasaun vasina COVID-19 iha programa imunizasaun rutina.
- Mantein ita-nia kampaña sensibilizasaun no promosaun vasina iha momentum hanesan.
- Suporta profesionál saúde sira atu mantein ekipamentu sira ne'ebé simu durante resposta COVID-19 nian.
- Halo fali sasán ne'ebé bele konsume no ekipamentu protesau pesoál, ne'ebé sei rekere orsamentu no kompromisu adisionál.

Durante período programa tomak, funsióariu tékniku no jestaun seniór sira husi Ministeriu Saúde, USAID no UNICEF hamutuk vizita ona munisípiu sira hodi monitoriza implementasaun no mós hatudu mensajen importante sira. Ita sei kontinua durante faze programa foun ne'e. Eventu ohin ne'e hanesan mós marku boot ida tan iha implementasaun programa konjunta.

Ha'u hato'o ha'u-nia sinseru agradesimentu ba ita-boot sira hotu ne'ebé envolve iha programa úniku ne'e husi Ministeriu Saúde, USAID no UNICEF. Ha'u hakarak imi-nia forsa no susesu hotu iha implementasaun faze ikus programa ne'e nian.

Obrigadu