

REPÚBLICA DEMOCRÁTICA DE TIMOR-LESTE



National Food and Nutrition Security Policy

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Definitions and Concepts

Food Security: Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (reaffirmed definition at the World Food Summit, 2009).

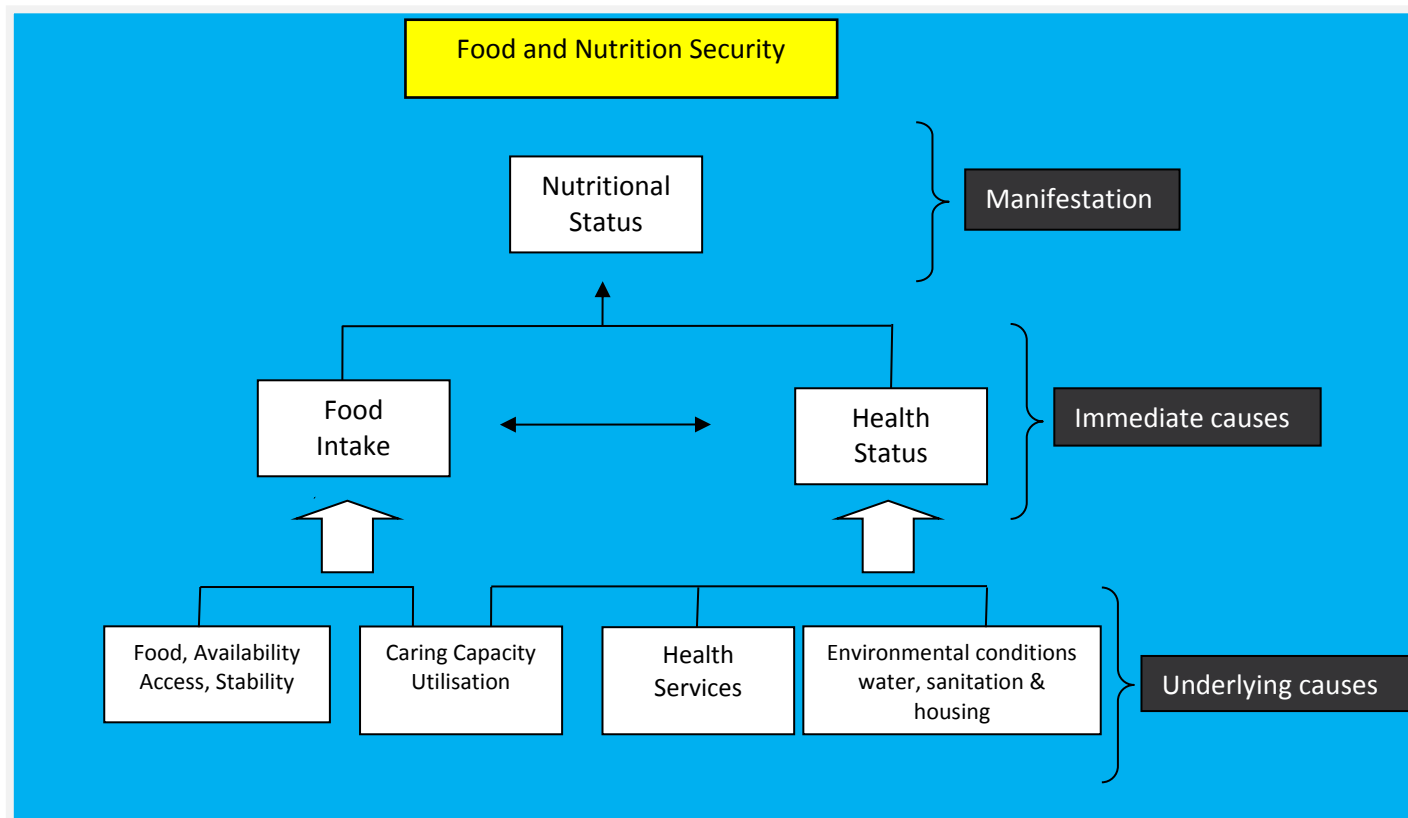
From this definition, four main dimensions of food security are identified: (1) Physical AVAILABILITY of food: Food availability addresses the “supply side” of food security and is determined by the level of food production, stock levels and net trade; (2) Economic and physical ACCESS to food: An adequate supply of food at the national or international level does not in itself guarantee household level food security. Concerns about insufficient food access have resulted in a greater policy focus on incomes, expenditure, markets and prices in achieving food security objectives; (3) Food UTILIZATION: Utilization is commonly understood as the way the body makes the most of various nutrients in the food. Sufficient energy and nutrient intake by individuals is the result of good care and feeding practices, food preparation, diversity of the diet and intra-household distribution of food. Combined with good biological utilization of food consumed, this determines the *nutritional status* of individuals; and (4) STABILITY of the other three dimensions over time: Even if food intake is adequate today, a person is still considered to be food insecure if he/she has inadequate access to food on a periodic basis, risking a deterioration of your nutritional status. Adverse weather conditions, political instability, or economic factors (unemployment, rising food prices) may have an impact on the food security status of individuals. For food security objectives to be realized, all four dimensions must be fulfilled simultaneously (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO).

It is common to draw a distinction between **chronic** food insecurity and **transitory** food insecurity. When individuals or groups of people suffer from food insecurity all of the time, then they can be said to suffer from chronic food insecurity. Transitory food insecurity occurs when households face a temporary decline in access to food. Transitory food insecurity can be further divided into **temporary** food insecurity and **cyclical** or **seasonal** food insecurity. Temporary food insecurity occurs when sudden and unpredictable shocks, such as drought or pest attack, affect a household's entitlements. For urban households, sudden unemployment may also be a cause of transitory food insecurity. Seasonal food insecurity occurs when there is a regular pattern of inadequate access to food. This is often linked to agricultural seasons, particularly when it is difficult for households to borrow to even out flows of food over time.

Nutrition Security: Nutrition security exists when adequate nutritional status is achieved. Nutrition security is defined as secure access to an appropriately nutritious diet (i.e. protein, carbohydrate, fat, vitamins, minerals and water) coupled with a sanitary environment and adequate health services and care, in order to ensure a healthy and active life for all household members (FAO, based on the WHO and World Bank definitions). In other words, nutrition security is an outcome of: (1) Good health; (2) Healthy environment; (3) Good caring practice (including prevention); and (4) Household level food security.

Food Sovereignty: The right of peoples and sovereign states to democratically determine their own agricultural and food policies (IAAKSTD, International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development).

Food and Nutrition Security:



Source: Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics, 2013 with modification

The broadened concept of food and nutrition security is illustrated above which recognises that both adequate food intake together with a positive health status are necessary to achieve food and nutrition security. Based on the food sovereignty principle, Government of Timor-Leste will implement the Food and Nutrition Security Policy in a manner that is economically viable, ecologically sound and socially appropriate to its unique circumstances.

Food Insecurity: Low level of food intake, which can be transitory (when it occurs in times of crisis), seasonal or chronic (when it occurs on a continuing basis).

Malnutrition: An abnormal physiological condition caused by inadequate, unbalanced or excessive consumption of macronutrients and/or micronutrients.

Undernourishment / Chronic Hunger: A state, lasting for at least one year, of inability to acquire enough food, defined as a level of food intake insufficient to meet dietary energy requirements. **Undernutrition:** The outcome of undernourishment, and/or poor absorption and/or poor biological use of nutrients consumed as a result of repeated infectious disease. It includes being underweight for one's age, too short for one's age (**stunted**), dangerously thin for one's height (**wasted**) and deficient in vitamins and minerals (**micronutrient malnutrition**).

Introduction

Food and nutrition security underpins national development. The Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2011-2030 recognises that the true wealth of a nation is in the strength of its people - *maximising the overall health, education and quality of life of the Timorese people is seen as central to building a fair and progressive nation. The children of Timor-Leste, in particular, deserve access to good health care, nutritious food, clean drinking water and good sanitation* – thus attaining national food and nutrition security continues to be a high-level national development priority. The SDP also envisages self-sufficiency in staple food production by 2020 and the Programme of the 5th Constitutional Government, 2012-2017 commits to improving food security and nutrition.

The Comoro Declaration issued by the 4th Constitutional Government of Timor-Leste in 2010 reaffirmed the entitlement for all to access good quality and nutritious food and the fundamental right that every person has to be free of hunger and malnutrition. The Declaration also recognised the need to further strengthen and increase coordination in the multi-dimensional areas of food and nutrition security with a relevant inter-ministerial coordination body and national action plan.

Consequently, the Government is committed to work in an inter-ministerial manner to take actions to address issues related to food and nutrition security in the key development areas such as agriculture, fisheries, health, education, infrastructure, trade, environment, disaster management and social protection. The purpose of the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy is therefore to guide and coordinate actions from various stakeholders towards common goals. Ministries with key roles in implementing this policy include: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF), Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Environment (MCIE), Ministry of Social Solidarity (MSS), Ministry of State Administration, Ministry of Public Works (MPW), Ministry of Finance (MOF) and Office of the Vice Prime Minister.

The National Food and Nutrition Security Policy is prepared through a series of consultation with broad range of stakeholders. It is based on the analysis of relevant food and nutrition information and a review of the 2005 National Food Security Policy. It provides an overarching framework covering the multiple dimensions of food and nutrition security. It is purposefully developed to build on existing national policies and initiatives by coordinating fragmented actions, reconciling conflicting policies and aligning them with higher-level national development goals. It thus provides a coherent framework for multi-sector actions addressing the underlying and immediate causes of food and nutrition insecurity. It recognises the need for public and private sector involvement in achieving national food and nutrition security, and that improving food and nutrition security is a shared responsibility of all Timorese people. The identified strategic actions will remain dynamic to accommodate evolving socio-economic conditions and emerging needs. The Government recognises the need for proactive policy responses to the food and nutrition security challenges in achieving its higher-level national development goals that are stipulated in the SDP.

Key Lessons from review of the 2005 Food Security Policy

Experience from the implementation of the 2005 Food Security Policy shows that improved coordination of multi-sector interventions especially those linking agriculture and nutrition is needed. Policy coordination within and across key subsectors is critical in providing coherent incentives to producers and consumers in different market segments. Furthermore, policy actions to improve food and nutrition security must be aligned with the country's natural resource endowments, macroeconomic environment and the state of infrastructure development in due consideration of its agroecosystems and traditional values. In view of overall budget constraints and environmental fragility, investment decisions should be based on sound cost-effectiveness analysis (vis-à-vis food and nutrition security) and include environmental impact assessment.

Investment decisions should be reflected to the budget allocation among and within the concerned ministries. Improving efficiency in delivery of support services and social safety net programmes is dependent on building human capacity and streamlining institutional structures. Local level decision making and actions are effective in reaching out target populations. Information systems need to be strengthened with improved data quality and timeliness of delivery to enable effective policy monitoring and sound investment decision making.

Food and Nutrition Security Policy Framework

Vision

By 2030 Timor-Leste will be free from hunger and malnutrition and Timorese people will enjoy healthy and productive lives. People in Timor-Leste will be well-fed principally from increased variety of locally produced safe and nutritious food for healthy and productive lives while witnessing carefully-managed agroecosystems.

Mission

The Government acknowledges the integral role that nutrition plays in ensuring a healthy population and productive work force. Reducing malnutrition and hunger in Timor-Leste, in economically viable, ecologically sound and socially appropriate manner, is a precondition for achieving higher national development goals (SDP) that calls for a multi-sector approach under the well-coordinated political leadership at all levels.

Principles

The strategic actions under this policy will be guided by:

- ❖ Based on basic human rights including children's rights, women's rights and Right to Food.
- ❖ Based on equity, reflecting the voices of the vulnerable people including subsistent farmers.
- ❖ Respecting cultural and traditional values.
- ❖ Protecting biodiversity and environmental sustainability.
- ❖ Acknowledging food sovereignty.
- ❖ Adopting a multi-stakeholder and multi-sector approach.
- ❖ Encouraging local level decision making and actions.
- ❖ Strengthening food and nutrition security information.

Key Targets and Indicators

By 2020:

- ✓ *Stunting among children below five years of age will be reduced to less than 40 percent, underweight to less than 30 percent and wasting to less than 10 percent.*
- ✓ *Anaemia among children below five years of age and women of reproductive age will be reduced to less than 30 percent and 20 percent, respectively.*
- ✓ *Maternal malnutrition indicated by thinness (low-body-mass index) reduced to less than 15 percent.*
- ✓ *Principally through sustainable increase in smallholder yields, the composite staple food (rice, maize, cassava, sweet potato) production index will increase from the 2012 level (=100) by 30 percent (=130).*
- ✓ *The average consumption of local fish will increase from 6 kg to 15 kg per capita.*
- ✓ *Household dietary diversity score: ≥5 number of food groups consumed for ≥50% of population.*
- ✓ *The number of people estimated to be below the national poverty line will be less than 15 percent.*
- ✓ *Household average Coping Strategy Index (CSI) decreased.*

Priority Strategic Action Areas

Outcome 1: Local nutritious food production increased and producers better linked to consumers

Strategy 1.1: Strengthen adaptive research and development by directing investment in cost-effective programmes in increasing smallholder production.

Strategy 1.2: Deliver extension services to small farmers to enhance productivity of existing crops and diversify into high nutritional value crops.

Strategy 1.3: Ensure that intervention programmes give special attention to women's role in food production and feeding family.

Strategy 1.4: Increase availability of micronutrients and protein-rich food including those from animal and fish.

Strategy 1.5: Increase productivity of diverse food crops, especially those with high protein and micronutrient contents, through improved upland rainfed systems.

Strategy 1.6: Protect water sources and improve water use management through the application of appropriate-scale irrigation technologies.

Strategy 1.7: Increase the productivity of small animals (pigs and poultry including egg layers).

Strategy 1.8: Promote sustainable aquaculture and develop coastal and inland fisheries focusing on increasing catch from traditional fishing activities.

Strategy 1.9: Strengthen market infrastructure, market information and business support services to small farmers and fishers.

Strategy 1.10: Adopt a supply chain approach for establishing viable food production and marketing chains ranging from farm inputs to end markets.

The SDP recognises that a thriving agricultural sector is necessary for reducing poverty, enhancing food and nutrition security and promoting economic growth. Viable agriculture sector will also promote rural development where majority of Timorese people live and work. **Adequate investment in agriculture will therefore be critical in achieving higher national goals.**

The increase in food production and agricultural productivity to strengthen food and nutrition security has increasingly been dependent on private sector activities (particularly land holders). **Government will strive to create a stable macroeconomic and transparent policy environment conducive to greater engagement of private sector and smallholder agricultural investments.** This includes correcting market distortions, particularly where distorting measures are not effective in achieving their objectives, and improve cost-effectiveness of the public investment by targeting the areas with a good potential to increase country-wide nutritious food supplies.

To improve clarity and predictability in the policy environment surrounding rice, **Government will formulate a clear policy statement, which articulates production, trade and pricing of rice.** The policy statement will also outline strategies on agricultural inputs, irrigation and water management, mechanisation, milling, storage and stocks.

Agricultural research and extension needs to be strengthened to meet growing food demands. **Cost-effectiveness of existing research programmes will be analysed, and investment will be increased in the areas that are effective.** Extension services will involve public and private sector players and target different groups including farmer groups. Existing training programmes by development partners and non-governmental organizations may be up-scaled where successful. Although extension services will be directed to all producers, focus will be given to women who play an important role in producing food and feeding family members.

Water will increasingly be a constraint in agricultural production therefore improved rainfed and irrigated water management must be

practiced. Recognising that majority of farmers do not have access to irrigated farmland, **investment will be made to improve upland rainfed food production systems.** Improved agricultural practices will increase the production of sufficient, safe and nutritious food while contributing to environmental sustainability. Conservation agriculture will be promoted to diversify domestic food production for improved household access to a wider range of nutritious foods. **Government will promote farming systems and practices that**

contribute to sound agroecosystems in the areas of integrated crop management, integrated pest management, agroforestry and aquaculture. Priorities are given to local crop varieties with high micronutrients and protein contents and animal and fish products.

Identification of the commodities with high financial returns and the potential markets for those commodities are critical in encouraging farmers to make the investments and/or change farming practices to increase their income. Good access to both inputs and product markets is also necessary to enable smallholder commercialisation.

In times of a strong and sustained market demand farmers tend to actively seek and adopt new technologies and methods to enhance productivity, add-value to the products and improve post-harvest handling. Government will adopt a supply chain approach to promote viable food production and marketing chains from input supplies, through farm production to end markets. Market chains for locally produced nutritious food to which small-farmers and fishers have an advantage will be developed. This will provide small producers with an option to sell their products at the market.

Existing acquisition programmes of local food for public institutions will be reviewed for possible improvement. **In line with the National Aquaculture Development Strategy, greater focus will be given to ensuring an increased supply of fishery products to domestic markets** and increasing national consumption of fishery products.

At the present stage of Timor-Leste's economic and private sector development, **improving market linkages for the smallholders and rural population largely remains a role of the public sector**. Government interventions will focus on the areas where the market is unable to provide effective and affordable services. Possible use of targeted subsidies to address market failures may be considered (examples could be for inputs, transport and information). Attention will be paid not to discourage private sector activities by distorting prices. **When subsidies are provided these will aim to facilitate the activities of the private sector that are still in an infant stage of development and to reach out to the vulnerable people including poor consumers and marginal producers.**

Outcome 2: Enhanced stability and resilience in food production and supply

Sustainable management of agriculture, forest and fisheries resources underpins the achievement of sustainable livelihoods and food and nutrition security. These resources are a source of food, shelter and economic development for Timorese people. It is important to ensure that these resources continue to provide important ecosystem services such as watershed protection and biodiversity conservation while achieving an adequate and stable food production. **Over the longer-term, preserving and extending food crop genetic biodiversity and adopting 'climate smart' agricultural practices to sustain agricultural productivity will reduce risks.** The steep slopes with shallow soils in Timor-Leste are very susceptible to erosion. Unsustainable land use and forest degradation have already taken a heavy toll on the water cycle, resulting in periodic water shortages, flash floods and landslides in addition to depletion of soil fertility. The inevitable consequences are lower crop yields, crop failures and food shortages. Healthy water catchments, rivers, forests and soils are the basis for productive farms and a healthy population. **Timor-Leste's land and water resources must be well-managed to avoid further degradation and to minimise the risk of environmental damage and loss of biodiversity. Forest protection, reforestation and sustainable land management remain priorities.** Capacities of rural communities, landowners and farmers will be enhanced so that they can use natural resources in a sustainable manner in increasing the production of nutritious

Strategy 2.1: Enhance capacities of rural communities, landowners and farmers to use natural resources in a sustainable manner to support an adequate and stable supply of locally produced nutritious food.

Strategy 2.2: Reorient the focus of the national policy from ‘crisis management or response’ to ‘risk reduction and resilience-building’.

Strategy 2.3: Accelerate the implementation of National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) on Climate Change.

Strategy 2.4: Identify and improve the use of local varieties resilient to extreme weather conditions, and where appropriate, cautiously introduce new crop varieties to mitigate risks.

Strategy 2.5: Developing appropriate risk management systems for vulnerable people, and improving safety net programmes

Strategy 2.6: Examine the effectiveness of strategic food reserve system for possible improvement.

Strategy 2.7: Better manage the use of food aid, and improve the food distribution to vulnerable households and communities.

Strategy 2.8: Repair and improve the maintenance of rural infrastructure to secure stable food supply.

food. **Local varieties that are resilient to extreme weather conditions will be identified and promoted.** Where appropriate, new crop varieties are cautiously introduced to mitigate risks.

Recent studies predict that the climate in Timor-Leste will become warmer and wetter and intensity of high winds and extreme rainfall events will increase. The potential impacts of climate change pose further challenges for farmers and threats to stability in food production. Stronger winds, higher temperatures and increase in rainfall intensity and changing rainfall patterns would negatively impact maize and rice productivity and exacerbate soil erosion, landslides, local flooding and water availability. Warmer temperatures are also likely to increase the incidence of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever. Floods, drought and other natural disasters can transform marginal forms of poverty into chronic vulnerability and food and nutrition insecurity. Actions are needed to protect, restore, and manage land, soil, and water sustainably to alleviate rural poverty and hunger and ensure long-term food and nutrition security. Implementation of National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) on Climate Change, which was approved in December 2010, needs to be accelerated.

Risk management systems and tools to provide food-based safety nets enable immediate relief to disadvantaged groups during crises. This includes a well-functioning food reserve system to distribute sufficient amount of good quality food in times of natural and human-made disasters (including food price volatility). Efficiency of existing food reserve system will be examined for possible improvement. Given the high cost of procuring, maintaining and distributing physical food stocks, and potential to

distort market signals, private sector may be involved. Rural infrastructure needs to be developed and maintained in a good condition to secure stable food supply.

Timor-Leste will reorient the focus of the national policy from ‘crisis management or response’ to ‘risk reduction and resilience-building’. Improved systems for monitoring and addressing risks are being developed. Disaster preparedness and management plans should indicate how food and agricultural systems will be effectively managed and protected in times of disasters and crisis. The Food and Nutrition Security policy framework will be aligned to the National Disaster Risk Management Policy (DRMP, 2008).

Outcome 3: Safe, quality, nutritious food consistently available in food outlets throughout the country

Increased production needs to be accompanied by the development of necessary market infrastructure to ensure the availability of safe and quality food at a household level. Improving storage facilities to reduce postharvest losses and developing efficient market systems to transport perishable horticulture, meat and fish products are particularly important. At the same time, appropriate food safety system needs to be developed and the knowledge to handle fresh products needs to be enhanced.

Strategy 3.1: Introduce simple and appropriate post-harvest technologies and post-harvest management methods.

Strategy 3.2: Build capacity for improved food processing and packaging.

Strategy 3.3: Improve storage and transportation system for fresh produce, and establish hygienic market centers.

Strategy 3.4: Develop cost effective methods for hygienic production, processing and marketing of meat and fish products.

Strategy 3.5: Regulate production and importation of products harmful to human health and environment.

Strategy 3.6: Put in place a harmonised policy, legal and regulatory framework for food safety, nutrition security and environmental protection.

Strategy 3.7: Develop an institutional structure to enforce food safety with clear roles and responsibility.

Strategy 3.8: Becoming a member of Codex Alimentarius and adopt the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes.

Improving post-harvest management systems, building capacity in processing and packaging and developing cool and dry storages and hygienic market facilities will increase the amount and variety of safe and nutritious food at district and sucos levels throughout the year. Public and private investment will be needed to improve transportation systems and storage and processing facilities to increase availability of fresh and processed horticulture, animal and fishery products throughout the country, including isolated rural villages.

A significant proportion of food currently consumed in Timor-Leste is imported, and controlling the safety of imported food is a challenge. Lack of adequate food safety standards and underdeveloped capacity and systems to enforce regulations allow importation of food items that pose health risks to consumers (e.g. old, damaged and contaminated products; and products with low nutritious value and/or high proportion of food additives). Consumers are also exposed to food products that are sold after specified use-by date and have undergone temperature abuse before or during distribution in Timor-Leste. Poor food handling practices in the national food service industry further increase risks of food contamination and transmission of food-borne diseases. **Appropriate food safety standards, policies, laws and regulations need to be put in place to control food imports and handling. Systems to enforce food safety standards should also be developed and capacity to undertake appropriate surveillance needs to be built.** Where appropriate, consideration is given to wider biosecurity. Possible actions would

include regulating environmentally-harmful products and promoting environmentally-friendly products such as biodegradable packages.

Aligning national food safety standards with internationally-accepted standards is recommended.

Becoming a member of Codex Alimentarius would help improve food safety in Timor-Leste. A national codex committee would provide a formal platform for dialogue between government and private sector stakeholders on food safety issues. Implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes would improve the nutritious status of infants and young children.

Outcome 4: Sustainable income generating opportunities in the rural areas increased to enhance economic access to nutritious food

Rural development underpins food and nutrition security. The SDP envisions that by 2020, rural communities will have adequate food, either directly from agricultural production or through other economic activities. Agriculture continues to be a basis for rural economic growth. **Viable agricultural sector not only provides income to farmers but also supports the development of agro-industry and related service industry.** The rural economy is dominated by subsistence agriculture, and slow pace of commercialisation depresses development of other non-farm activities in rural areas. Smallholder agriculture can improve livelihoods but only if it is productive, profitable, sustainable, resilient and well linked to markets.

Strategy 4.1: Develop rural infrastructure using local labours.

Strategy 4.2: Increase women's access to income-generating opportunities to maximise impact of household income on the family's nutrition.

Strategy 4.3: Develop small-scale fisheries sector to increase job opportunities in the coastal areas.

Strategy 4.4: Expand appropriately-designed micro-finance and small enterprise development skill training programmes.

Strategy 4.5: In line with the National Youth Policy, provide quality technical and vocational training for young people.

Basic infrastructure is vital to creating income generating

opportunities in rural areas. It is essential to increase access to markets and employment and to health, education and agricultural services. Infrastructure works also provide short-term employment opportunities in the rural areas when local labours are utilized. The National Programme for Decentralised Development (PDD) aims to reduce poverty in all villages by providing direct grants for community-prioritised infrastructure. The National Programme for Village Development (PNDS) aims for empowering communities by giving them control of their projects, improving inclusiveness and participation in community decision-making and providing training and jobs. Women are intended to be involved at every stage of the PNDS cycle.

Global experience has clearly shown that household nutrition status improves where women have increased access to income generating opportunities. The Government will promote women's access to

productive resources including land, water and local seeds and empower them to plant gardens, raise livestock and build water storage facilities. Village consultations during the preparation of this policy indicated that women put a very high priority on their children's education and nutrition. **This policy promotes opportunity for increased income earning by women, especially young mothers from lowest wealth quintile.** The small-scale fisheries sector (sea fishers, reef gleaners, shell fish gathers, and aquaculture) remains under-developed but offers the significant income generating and employment opportunities for coastal communities, particularly for women. Developing the fisheries sector will therefore serve the dual purpose of improving nutritional status and household income.

Expanding employment opportunities across the economy is necessary to reduce poverty and increase purchasing power to access nutritious foods. Access to finance is essential for the development of small-scale rural enterprises, including agribusiness enterprises. Expansion of well-designed micro finance schemes, which takes into consideration the saving and expenditure pattern of rural households, should be a priority. Skill training for small business development should also be provided. With some 50 percent of the population below the age of 19 and high birth rates, providing job opportunities for youth is a growing challenge in the rural areas and in the main centres of Dili and Baucau. The Government needs to provide the practical skills trainings, both in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors, to utilize abundant labour force in achieving economic growth.

Outcome 5: Improved access to nutritious foods and nutrient intake by vulnerable people

Outreach to poor and vulnerable households is critical in achieving food and nutrition security in Timor-Leste. Safe and nutritious food must be available to all regardless of income. This Policy reaffirms **the Right to Food for all Timorese citizens**. Emergency food assistance and well-targeted social safety nets remain critical for ensuring the poorest and most vulnerable people's access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food at all times.

Capacity to map communities that are vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity will be strengthened for effective targeted intervention. Guidelines and regulations on food-based safety net strategies will be developed. A mechanism to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of food-based safety net programmes will be put in place, and existing safety net programmes will be reviewed for possible improvement.

Strategy 5.1: Strengthen capacity to map communities that are vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity for effective targeted intervention.

Strategy 5.2: Develop guidelines and regulations on food-based safety net programmes and evaluate the effectiveness of existing programmes.

Strategy 5.3: Promote exclusive breast feeding (0-6 months old) and complementary feeding (until 24 months)

Strategy 5.4: Accelerate reduction of maternal and child under-nutrition through nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive interventions.

Strategy 5.5: Develop strategy, guidelines and regulations on food fortification; and promote production and trade of iodized salt.

Strategy 5.6: Promote micronutrient intake among infant and young child, mothers, and adolescent girls.

Strategy 5.7: Develop guidelines to improve school feeding programmes.

Food based safety nets tend to work well in building the resilience of vulnerable people when well-targeted. The use of food vouchers and/or cash transfers to properly identified vulnerable groups may be considered, with due consideration of not distorting markets, as an alternative to broad food price subsidies. Conditional nutrition training may be accompanied. This enables vulnerable people to access locally produced nutritious food and thus pass on benefits to local producers.

The priority is given to the improvement of nutrient intake by mothers, children and adolescent girls. **During pregnancy and the first two years of life is when most gains can be made** through the interventions to reduce morbidity and mortality and to prevent the onset of nutrition related health problems later in life. For infants, food security is primarily about exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life and the introduction of nutritious complementary foods thereafter. **Raising awareness of the benefit of breast feeding is a priority.** Micronutrient supplementation (i.e. iron and folic acid) of pregnant women, children and adolescent girls is effective when there are low levels of food fortification and consumption of nutrient rich food. Natural and traditional means to improve micronutrients intake, such as through moringa/marung consumption, can be promoted. In food insecure areas, supplementary food may also be considered.

The national school feeding programme should be continued and scaled up to provide school children with safe and nutritious food for productive learning and healthy living. **The programme needs to be properly designed and regulated** to ensure the quality and safety of school meals. Locally produced nutritious food can be used where available, and school food gardens will be promoted. Cross-sectoral support needs to be mobilized to reduce operational costs.

Outcome 6: Improved health status of children and women

Food supply alone is not sufficient to achieve food and nutrition security. Complementary health activities bring about additional benefits to food and nutrition security. **Access to clean water and sanitation facilities and good health services together with good hygiene practices are particularly effective in enhancing nutritional health status.** Two significant causes of infant and child mortality in Timor-Leste – lower respiratory infection and diarrheal disease – are directly linked to the access to clean water and sanitation facilities and hygiene practices. The Government has committed to strengthening national water supply, water resources and sanitation policy frameworks therefore allocating increased budget on the water supply,

Strategy 6.1: Improve access to safe water and sanitation at schools.

Strategy 6.2: Improve health care for adolescent girls, mothers and children.

Strategy 6.3: Promote good nutrition and hygiene practices for all.

Strategy 6.4: In line with health priorities continue to improve prevention, treatment and care for diseases affecting nutrition status, including management of acute malnutrition

sanitation and hygiene development. Priority is given to improved water supply and sanitation facilities at schools.

Nutritional health interventions will prioritise focus on pregnant women and children less than 2 years of age to optimally use the “window of opportunity of 1000 days from pregnancy to 24 months”.

This Policy promotes the implementation of well-integrated food and nutrition programmes with a range of health interventions, such as dietary diversification, supplementation, fortification, helminth worm control, health care access, immunizations, potable water, sanitation and hygiene to improve health and save lives.

Outcome 7: Improved education, awareness and advocacy on food and nutrition security

Strategy 7.1: Raise awareness on the roles of nutrition and good practice on health and physical and cognitive developments.

Strategy 7.2: Integrate nutrition in school curricula starting at the earliest age and at every grade level.

Strategy 7.3: Promote local nutritious food consumption at schools and food outlets, including hotels and restaurants.

Strategy 7.4: Integrate nutrition education, diet diversity, food preparation and safe food preservation into agricultural extension programmes.

Strategy 7.5: Promote workshops and demonstrations on home gardening, urban gardening and use, preparation and preservation of nutritious local foods.

People in Timor-Leste from all income groups experience health problems and sometimes premature death due to poor quality diet, less than optimal nutrition, and exposure to unsafe food and water. This can start with inadequate prenatal nutrition and breastfeeding, premature weaning, and reliance on inappropriate infant and baby foods. Inadequate home health care and care seeking during illness exacerbates these problems. Many people do not have balanced diet with the recommended amount of carbohydrate staples, protein-rich foods (meat and fish), vegetables and fruit. Poor dietary practices are due mainly to limited physical and economic access to nutritious food, and inadequate information on nutrition and health.

A strategic priority of this Policy is making food and nutrition information available and building the awareness and capacity of the people on healthy diet so that they can make informed decisions on their diet. The food and nutrition security causality pathway needs to be well understood, healthy options promoted and appropriate standard and regulations put in place (e.g. clearer standards for food

labels, food fortification, ‘sin tax’ on unhealthy foods, food content regulations) to facilitate the decision making.

Students with good and balanced diet are more likely to perform well at school. **Awareness on the role of nutritious food on physical and cognitive development needs to be raised among parents, teachers and students.** Schools that integrate health and nutrition activities into their classrooms and communities can function as a hub of knowledge and practice beyond the school-aged child. School gardens can disseminate good practices to communities and increase awareness of the importance of good nutrition and dietary diversity. Integrating health and nutrition education into lessons, meals, and gardening activities promotes healthy habits and good practices such as dietary diversity, food and water safety, food processing, nutrient preservation, sanitation, and hygiene. Students will graduate with a good understanding of healthy food – how to access it and safely prepare it.

Together with various partners, the Government will promote campaigns on healthy food choices including underutilised indigenous foods (e.g. breadfruit); and promote home gardening, urban gardening and preparation of nutritious local foods. The Ministry of Health together with the Ministry of Education will formulate culturally appropriate guidelines and tools for education, awareness and promotion of good nutrition and caring practices, and the use and preparation of local foods. Attention will also be paid to appropriate storage and preservation of food to minimise food spoilage and wastage (e.g. Aflatoxin and mycotoxin contamination in foods). Nutritional health education will be integrated into health programmes in order to disseminate information about the importance of safe drinking water, basic sanitation and good hygiene practices.

Outcome 8: An effective integrated food and nutrition security information system in place

Strategy 8.1: Allocate adequate resources to effectively collect, integrate, analyse and report quality food and nutrition statistics.

Strategy 8.2: Strengthen the Suco-Level Food Security Monitoring System (SLMS) initiated by Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and coordinate with national nutrition surveillance systems.

Strategy 8.3: Strengthen the National Information and Early Warning System (NIEWS) on food and nutrition security and link with the Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS).

Strategy 8.4: Establish a sentinel surveillance system to monitor food and nutrition services, behaviour, practices and outcomes.

Strategy 8.5: Improve standardisation of approaches and indicators used in national surveys (e.g. Population Census, HIES, Survey of Living Standards, Demographic Health Surveys, Nutrition Surveys).

Strategy 8.6: Support the timely distribution of food and nutrition information products.

Reliable and up-to-date data and information on food security and nutrition and their related areas are essential for sound policy analysis and evidence-based policy decisions. Food and nutrition security information is also necessary for the formulation of food and nutrition security programmes. **This Policy promotes improvement of the flow and quality of data and information on food and nutrition security for effective evidence-based policymaking and programming.**

Integrated food and nutrition security information system is required for multi-sector responses to food and nutrition insecurity. In 2011, the Government established an Inter-Ministerial Food and Nutrition Security Task Force to improve coordinated generation, analysis and dissemination of reliable, timely and updated food and nutrition security information. The capacity of this institution will be strengthened as a part of the overall effort to ensure inter-ministerial food security and nutrition institutional coordination mechanism.

To improve interventions to target groups such as disadvantaged and vulnerable people, it will be necessary to develop a more disaggregated database at the district, sub-district and suco levels.

The Government also recognises the need to put in place an effective early warning system that provides alerts on nutrition and

food insecurity precipitated by emergencies such as drought, floods, tsunami, earthquake or unfavourable food market conditions. Effective system to monitor climate variability and trends needs to be developed.

The improved information will help the Government approach food and nutrition security in a holistic manner with the better-understanding of its links to macroeconomic, poverty, agriculture, health, education, social protection and other factors that are affecting the status of food and nutrition security.

Policy Implementation

Food and Nutrition Security Policy brings together multiple agencies and groups within and outside the Government. An effective coordination among these stakeholders will therefore be a key to the successful implementation. The National Council on Food Security, Sovereignty and Nutrition (KONSSANTIL), which consists of representation from ministries and government agencies in the key areas related to food and nutrition security, will coordinate and consolidate the roles and functions that are fragmented in different government agencies. Investment decisions by different Ministries will be aligned, and each Ministry will establish a budget line that is dedicated to the implementation of Food and Nutrition Security Policy. With well-coordinated political leadership, the KONSSANTIL will seek support and mobilise resources from private sectors and development partners.

The KONSSANTIL will be a major advocate for food and nutrition security in Timor-Leste. The KONSSANTIL will promote local level decision making and actions, and encouraging participation of different group of people, including those from the socially deprived groups, women and children groups and smallholder and poor farmers, private sector, institutions with educational mandate, faith-based organisations, non-governmental/civil society organisations, bilateral and multilateral development partners.

An effective implementation of Food and Nutrition Security Policy requires coordinated policy actions. Aligning agriculture and social protection policies is particularly important. This will provide incentives to Timor-Leste's abundant economically-active population to achieve food and nutrition security through productivity growth. The KONSSANTIL undertakes the review and endorsement of policies, laws and regulations related to food and nutrition security.

The KONSSANTIL will monitor and review the implementation of Food and Nutrition Security Policy on a regular basis. This includes reviewing the relevance of priority actions against the emerging needs and assessing the effectiveness of institutional structure to deliver public services. Necessary adjustment will be made in the operational plan to implement the Food and Nutrition Security Policy. The *Summary M&E Matrix* in Annex 2 will help align food security and nutrition related activities within a common result framework.

Institutional Roles and Responsibilities

Planning, resource mobilisation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of Food and Nutrition Security Policy require clearly-defined roles and responsibilities among stakeholders working on different areas. The KONSSANTIL provides guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders and oversees their activities in the implementation of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy. Roles of the key government ministries and agencies for achieving the eight development outcomes are presented in the *Summary Food and Nutrition Policy Framework* in Annex 1. This policy framework does not stipulate an exhaustive list of stakeholders and their roles. An operational plan will spell out the detailed roles and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders with budgets and timelines.

Governance

The KONSSANTIL is responsible for the implementation of Food and Nutrition Security Policy. This will entail the coordination of multi-sectoral inputs provided by different government agencies and partners, and oversight to their activities. The KONSSANTIL monitors the delivery of outputs and outcomes necessary to achieve the policy goals by tracking progress against the indicators identified in the *Summary Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Matrix* in Annex 2. The KONSSANTIL is also responsible for finalising investment plans and reviewing the budget allocation concerning food and nutrition security.

Along with the horizontal coordination at the central level, vertical coordination with the District and Suco levels will be provided. A District Food and Nutrition Security Committee (DFNSC), established in each of the 12 Districts, will coordinate at a decentralised level. The Committee shall comprise representatives of relevant government institutions, suco councils, non-governmental/civil society organisations and other partners working in the district. The District Administrator will act as Coordinator for DFNSC's with the Director of MAF as Vice-Coordinator.

The KONSSANTIL Permanent Technical Secretariat (PTS) will review technical, administrative, financial and communication activities, and ensures the timely implementation of KONSSANTIL decisions. It will liaise closely with the political leaders to align executive policy decisions concerning the implementation of Food and Nutrition Security Policy. The PTS will be supported by an inter-ministerial Food and Nutrition Security Working Group (FNSWG) comprised of technical specialists from relevant government agencies. The FNSWG will work closely with knowledge institutions in and outside the country in providing policy analysis and advisory services. The FNSWG will be responsible for collecting, analysing and maintaining the information on the state of food and nutrition security in Timor-Leste. A secretariat support unit to provide logistical support for PTS/FNSWG will be established with sustainable financing.

Operational and Finance Planning

The strategic actions will be translated into mutually-supporting priority programmes in the eight outcome areas. A fully-budgeted operational plan, which indicates roles and responsibilities, target groups, activities with timelines and expected outputs, will be formulated for each priority programme. A realistic investment plan will accompany the operational plans. The investment plan will be shared with relevant partners for resource mobilization.

The KONSSANTIL PTS will facilitate the joint formulation and implementation of the priority programmes to ensure that needs and concerns at different levels are reflected in the decision making. Where related programmes and action plans already exist, efforts will be made to align them under the framework of Food and Nutrition Security Policy to tap synergy and avoid duplication.

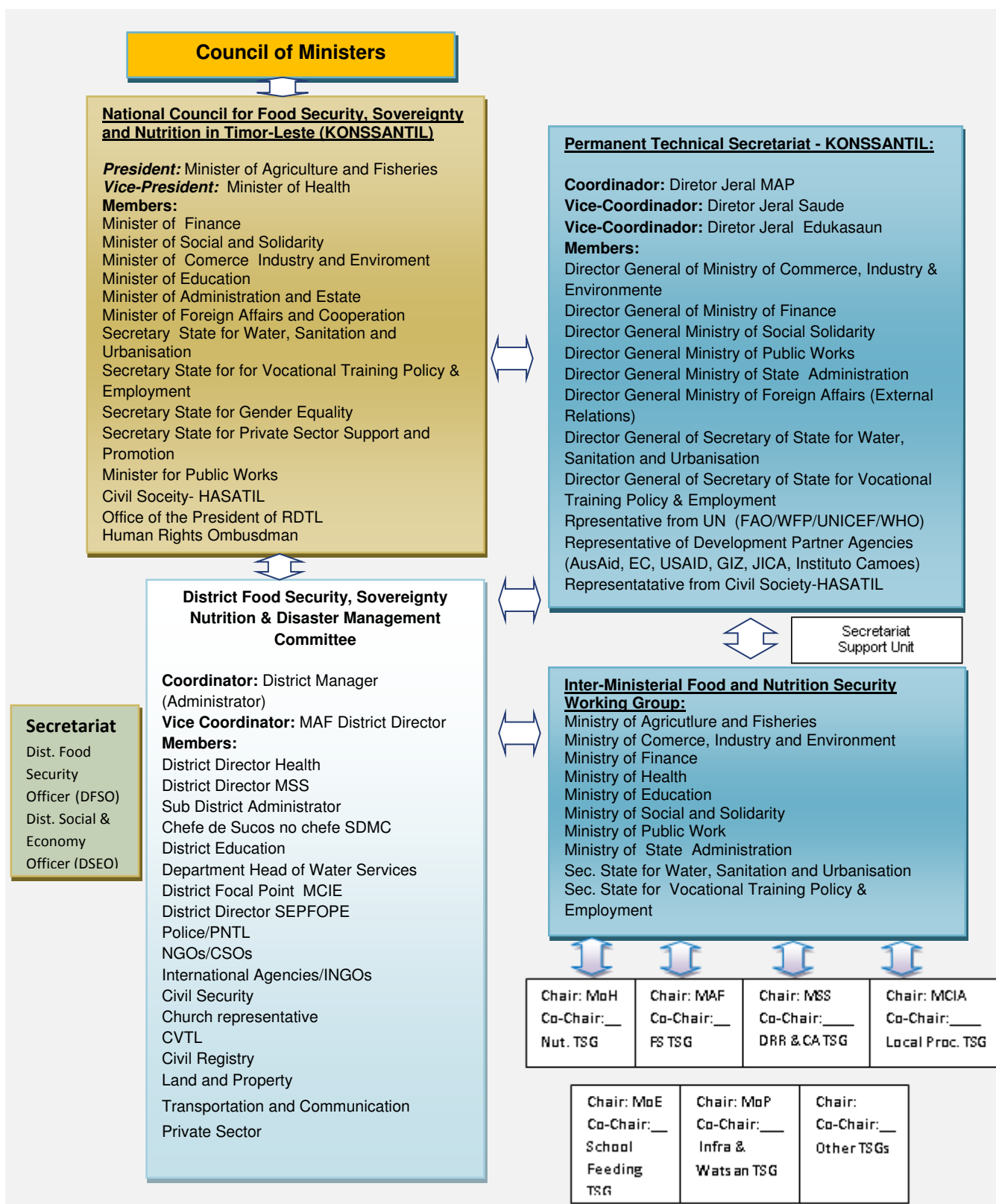
Monitoring and Evaluation

An effective and affordable monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system is necessary in ensuring that strategic actions are achieving desired outcomes. Monitoring facilitates necessary adjustments on the implementation plan. Effective monitoring on the resource use also facilitates resource mobilization.

The PTS in close collaboration with the National Statistics Office (MOF) will be responsible for establishing the monitoring and evaluation framework, monitoring and evaluating the progress, and preparing periodic implementation reports. The policy will be subject to a mid-term evaluation no later than three years after its endorsement by the Council of Ministers. An effective and timely monitoring and evaluation allows the KONSSANTIL to reflect on what has and what has not worked and feed these lessons into future planning.

The system requires a set of baseline data. A minimum set of core indicators will be established to start with, and they will be elaborated overtime. Results of the various surveys will be utilized in the establishment of indicators (e.g. Household Income and Expenditure Surveys, Demographic Health Surveys, Nutrition Surveys, and Population Census). The M&E Matrix in Annex 2 identifies broad indicators that should be tracked at the development outcome level. More disaggregated targets and indicators, that reflect regional context and priorities, need to be established at the output level. Gender, age and geographical disaggregation are particularly instrumental in monitoring the impacts on vulnerable communities and groups.

KONSSANTIL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



Annexes

1. Summary Food and Nutrition Security Policy Framework

POLICY GOAL	
By 2030 Timor-Leste will be free from hunger and malnutrition and Timorese people will enjoy healthy and productive lives. People in Timor-Leste will be well-fed principally from increased variety of locally produced safe and nutritious food for healthy and productive lives while witnessing carefully-managed agroecosystems.	
DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES	STRATEGIC ACTIONS
<p><i>1. Local nutritious food production increased and producers better linked to consumers</i></p> <p>The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) will have the lead role in implementing and coordinating actions to deliver Outcome 1. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Environment (MCIE) will have an important supporting role for improved trade practices and strengthening cooperatives in the areas of marketing and credit provision. Partnerships with the private sector will be built.</p> <p>Private sectors and NGOs/CSOs will continue to be vital players in the delivery of actions to achieve this development outcome. The Government will collaborate with relevant partners for efficient resource use and effective outreach.</p>	<p>Strategy 1.1: Strengthen adaptive research and development by directing investment in cost-effective programmes in increasing smallholder production.</p> <p>Strategy 1.2: Deliver extension services to small farmers to enhance productivity of existing crops and diversify into high nutritional value crops.</p> <p>Strategy 1.3: Ensure that intervention programmes give special attention to women's role in food production and feeding family.</p> <p>Strategy 1.4: Increase availability of micronutrients and protein-rich food including those from animal and fish.</p> <p>Strategy 1.5: Increase productivity of diverse food crops, especially those with high protein and micronutrient contents, through improved upland rainfed systems.</p> <p>Strategy 1.6: Protect water sources and improve water use management through the application of appropriate-scale irrigation technologies.</p> <p>Strategy 1.7: Increase the productivity of small animals (pigs and poultry including egg layers).</p> <p>Strategy 1.8: Promote sustainable aquaculture and develop coastal and inland fisheries focusing on increasing catch from traditional fishing activities.</p> <p>Strategy 1.9: Strengthen market infrastructure, market information and business support services to small farmers and fishers.</p> <p>Strategy 1.10: Adopt a supply chain approach for establishing viable food production and marketing chains ranging from farm inputs to end markets.</p>

<p>2. <i>Enhanced stability and resilience in food production and supply</i></p> <p>The MCIE (Environment, Climate Change) National Disaster Management Directorate (NDMD) and MAF will take the lead roles supported by the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MSS).</p>	<p>Strategy 2.1: Enhance capacities of rural communities, landowners and farmers to use natural resources in a sustainable manner to support an adequate and stable supply of locally produced nutritious food.</p> <p>Strategy 2.2: Reorient the focus of the national policy from 'crisis management or response' to 'risk reduction and resilience-building'.</p> <p>Strategy 2.3: Accelerate the implementation of National Adaptation Programme for Action (NAPA) 2010.</p> <p>Strategy 2.4: Identify and improve the use of local varieties resilient to extreme weather conditions, and where appropriate, cautiously introduce new crop varieties to mitigate risks.</p> <p>Strategy 2.5: Developing appropriate risk management systems for vulnerable people, and improving safety net programmes</p> <p>Strategy 2.6: Examine the effectiveness of strategic food reserve system for possible improvement.</p> <p>Strategy 2.7: Better manage the use of food aid, and improve the food distribution to vulnerable households and communities.</p> <p>Strategy 2.8: Repair and improve the maintenance of rural infrastructure to secure stable food supply.</p>
<p>3. <i>Safe, quality nutritious food consistently available in food outlets throughout the country</i></p> <p>MCIE, MAF and Ministry of Health (MOH), will jointly lead the implementation of Outcome 3.</p>	<p>Strategy 3.1: Introduce simple and appropriate post-harvest technologies and post-harvest management methods.</p> <p>Strategy 3.2: Build capacity for improved food processing and packaging.</p> <p>Strategy 3.3: Improve storage and transportation system for fresh produce, and establish hygienic market centers.</p> <p>Strategy 3.4: Develop cost effective methods for hygienic production, processing and marketing of meat and fish products.</p> <p>Strategy 3.5: Regulate production and importation of products harmful to human health and environment.</p> <p>Strategy 3.6: Put in place a harmonised policy, legal and regulatory framework for food safety, nutrition security and environmental protection.</p> <p>Strategy 3.7: Develop an institutional structure to enforce food safety with clear roles and responsibility.</p> <p>Strategy 3.8: Becoming a member of Codex Alimentarius and adopt the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes.</p>

<p>4. <i>Sustainable income generating opportunities in the rural areas increased to enhance economic access to nutritious food</i></p> <p>The Office of the Vice Prime Minister (Secretary of State for Youth and Sports, Secretary of State for Vocational Training Policy and Employment), the Ministry of State Administration (Secretary of State for Local Development) and MCIE (Secretary of State for Industry and Cooperatives) will all have lead roles. Many supporting agencies including Business Development Centres, Financial institutions and NGOs/CSOs will have important roles in supporting this development outcome.</p>	<p>Strategy 4.1: Develop rural infrastructure using local labours.</p> <p>Strategy 4.2: Increase women's access to income-generating opportunities to maximise impact of household income on the family's nutrition.</p> <p>Strategy 4.3: Develop small-scale fisheries sector to increase job opportunities in the coastal areas.</p> <p>Strategy 4.4: Expand appropriately-designed micro-finance and small enterprise development skill training programmes.</p> <p>Strategy 4.5: In line with the National Youth Policy, provide quality technical and vocational training for young people.</p>
<p>5. <i>Improved access to nutritious foods and nutrient intake by vulnerable people</i></p> <p>The MOH and MSS will lead implementation of actions to deliver Outcome 5 with support from Ministry of Education (MOE).</p>	<p>Strategy 5.1: Strengthen capacity to map communities that are vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity for effective targeted intervention.</p> <p>Strategy 5.2: Develop guidelines and regulations on food-based safety net programmes and evaluate the effectiveness of existing programmes.</p> <p>Strategy 5.3: Promote exclusive breast feeding (0-6 months old) and complementary feeding (until 24 months)</p> <p>Strategy 5.4: Accelerate reduction of maternal and child under-nutrition through nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive interventions.</p> <p>Strategy 5.5: Develop strategy, guidelines and regulations on food fortification; and promote production and trade of iodized salt.</p> <p>Strategy 5.6: Promote micronutrient intake among infant and young child, mothers, and adolescent girls.</p> <p>Strategy 5.7: Develop guidelines to improve school feeding programmes.</p>

<p>6. <i>Improved health status of women and children</i></p> <p>The MOH and Ministry of Public Works (Secretary of State for Water and Sanitation) will lead implementation of actions to deliver Outcome 6.</p>	<p>Strategy 6.1: Improve access to safe water and sanitation at schools.</p> <p>Strategy 6.2: Improve health care for adolescent girls, mothers and children.</p> <p>Strategy 6.3: Promote good nutrition and hygiene practices for all.</p> <p>Strategy 6.4: In line with health priorities continue to improve prevention, treatment and care for diseases affecting nutrition status, including management of acute malnutrition.</p>
<p>7. <i>Improved education, awareness and advocacy on food and nutrition security</i></p> <p>The MOE and MOH will lead implementation of actions to deliver Outcome 7. MAF will have an important supporting role. Close partnership with active NGOs/CSOs will be important.</p>	<p>Strategy 7.1: Raise awareness on the roles of nutrition and good practice on health and physical and cognitive developments.</p> <p>Strategy 7.2: Integrate nutrition in school curricula starting at the earliest age and at every grade level.</p> <p>Strategy 7.3: Promote local nutritious food consumption at schools and food outlets, including hotels and restaurants.</p> <p>Strategy 7.4: Integrate nutrition education, diet diversity, food preparation and safe food preservation into agricultural extension programmes.</p> <p>Strategy 7.5: Promote workshops and demonstrations on home gardening, urban gardening and use, preparation and preservation of nutritious local foods.</p>
<p>8. <i>An effective integrated food and nutrition security information system in place</i></p> <p>The Ministry of Finance (National Directorate of Statistics) will have the lead role, with active support from MOH, MAF, MCIE, MSS and all agencies supporting food and nutrition security. The Government will collaborate with international/regional organizations and knowledge institutions.</p>	<p>Strategy 8.1: Allocate adequate resources to effectively collect, integrate, analyse and report quality food and nutrition statistics.</p> <p>Strategy 8.2: Strengthen the Suco-Level Food Security Monitoring System (SLMS) initiated by Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and coordinate with national nutrition surveillance systems.</p> <p>Strategy 8.3: Strengthen the National Information and Early Warning System (NIEWS) on food and nutrition security and link with the Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS).</p> <p>Strategy 8.4: Establish a sentinel surveillance system to monitor food and nutrition services, behaviour, practices and outcomes.</p> <p>Strategy 8.5: Improve standardisation of approaches and indicators used in national surveys (e.g. Population Census, HIES, Survey of Living Standards, Demographic Health Surveys, Nutrition Surveys).</p> <p>Strategy 8.6: Support the timely distribution of food and nutrition information products.</p>

2. Summary Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Matrix

Results	Indicator	Target 2020
Impact: <i>By 2030 Timor-Leste will be free from hunger and malnutrition and Timorese people will enjoy healthy and productive lives. People in Timor-Leste will be well-fed principally from increased variety of locally produced safe and nutritious food for healthy and productive lives while witnessing carefully-managed agroecosystems.</i>	Prevalence of Stunting in children ≤ 5	≤ 40%
	Prevalence of Wasting in children ≤ 5	≤ 10%
	Prevalence of Underweight in Children ≤ 5	≤ 30%
	Prevalence of thinness low body mass index) among women	≤ 20%
	Prevalence of anaemia in children ≤ 5	≤ 30%
	Prevalence of anaemia in women of reproductive age	≤ 20%
	Prevalence of iron deficiency, iodine Deficiency, and vitamin A deficiency	Decreased
	Composite staple food production index	Decreased
	Average per capita consumption of fish	Increased by 30%
	Household dietary diversity score	15 kg per annum
	Number of people below the national poverty line	≥5 for ≥ 50% population
	Percentage of undernourished people	≤ 15%
	Household Average Coping Strategies Index	Decreased
	Overall staple food deficit	Zero
Outcome 1: <i>Local nutritious food production increased and producers better linked to consumers</i>	Diversification of crops grown on farms	Increased
	Amount of locally grown fruit & vegetables	≥ 50%
	Amount of protein in diet supplied from animal sources	Increased
	Aquaculture production	9,000 Mt
	Capture fish production	12,000 Mt
	Livestock numbers	Increased by 20%
	Post harvest losses	Reduced by 40%
	Proportion of imported food consumed in diets	Reduced by 20%
	Ratio of food imports to total imports	≤ 10%
	Proportion of land under forest	55%
Outcome 2: <i>Enhanced stability and resilience in food production and supply</i>	Total area of irrigation (rehabilitated large river diversion schemes and smaller community-based schemes)	Increased by 40%
	Incidence of foreign pest, disease and invasive species incursions	Reduced
	Cereal import dependency ratio	Reduced to ≤ 15%
	Per capita food production variability	Reduced
	Per capita food supply variability	Reduced
	Number of household food deficit days	Reduced
	Disaster-related damages and losses in food and agriculture sectors	Reduced
	% of NAPA programmes implemented	≥70%
	Availability of affordable quality food throughout the country	Customer satisfaction improved
	Food quality and safety standards	Established and standards met by food service industry
Outcome 3: <i>Safe, quality, nutritious food consistently available in food outlets throughout the country</i>	National Food Bill and Regulations in place	By end 2016
	Prevalence of food related diseases/food contamination	Reduced
	Accession to Codex Alimentarius	By end 2015
	International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes adopted and implemented	By end 2015

Results	Indicator	Target 2020
Outcome 4: <i>Sustainable income generating opportunities in rural areas increased to enhance economic access to nutritious food</i>	Median per capita rural income	Increased relative to inflation
	% of rural population below poverty line	≤ 20%
	Share of rural household expenditure on food to total household income/expenditure	Decreased
	Number households and individuals reporting lack of sufficient food	Reduced by 50%
Outcome 5: <i>Improved access to nutritious foods and nutrient intake by vulnerable people</i>	% exclusive breastfeeding among children <6 months	≥70%
	% of children 6-23 months receiving minimum dietary diversity	≥70%
	% children 6-23 met minimum acceptable diet	≥50%
	Cure rate of Severe Acute Malnutrition among children 6-59months	≥75%
	Recovery rate of children with moderate acute malnutrition being treated with specialised nutritious food locally produced (Timor-Vita)	>75%
	% children receiving 6 monthly vitamin A supplementation	≥80%
	% children 6-23 months old received Micronutrient Powder (MNP)	>70%
	% households consuming iodized salt	≥80%
	National School Feeding Programme	Regulated and efficiently delivered
	% Low birth weight	Decreased
Outcome 6: <i>Improved health status of children and women</i>	Proportion of children 12-24 months fully immunized	≥90%
	Proportion of children under-five de-wormed	≥80%
	% under 5 years children with diarrhea	≤ 17%
	% children under-five with diarrhea treated with ORS and Zinc	≥70%
	% of children under-five with acute respiratory infection treated by health care provider	Increased
	Rural access to improved drinking water source	≥75%
	Rural access to improved sanitation facilities	≥64%
	% mothers washing hands with soap at critical times	Increased
	Food security and nutrition included in school curriculum	Implemented at all schools at all levels
	Number of households practicing home gardening in both urban and rural areas.	Increased
Outcome 7: <i>Improved education, awareness and advocacy on food and nutrition security</i>	Amounts (number of daily servings) of fruit and vegetables in diets	Increased (WHO recommendation met)
	Food security and nutrition data collection and management system	In place and well-functioning
Outcome 8: <i>An effective integrated food and nutrition security information system in place</i>	Sub-district level sentinel monitoring system	In place and well-functioning
	National Food Security and Nutrition Information and Early Warning System	In place and well-functioning
	Regular quality reports on food security and nutrition situation in Timor-Leste	Quarterly report produced and distributed

3. Food and Nutrition Security Situation

Background

The 1st Constitutional Government of Timor-Leste adopted the National Food Security Policy in 2005. This Food and Nutrition Security Policy has reflected the lessons learnt from the implementation of the 2005 Policy.

The 2005 Policy identified the main causes of food insecurity as the widespread practice of subsistence agriculture, lack of alternative sources of income and thus lack of access to food due to low purchasing power. Widespread poverty – *more than 40 percent of population living below the poverty line* - meant that a large part of the population did not have sufficient economic access to food. The agriculture sector was recognised to have special importance because agriculture is the main source of food, employment and income for two-thirds of the population who mainly live in rural areas. However the potential of the sector was not fully realised as the lack of appropriate inputs and technology had resulted in low productivity and production. Despite the significant public effort, in particular the investment in the large-scale irrigation schemes in the rice subsector, overall performance of the agriculture sector remained weak. As a result, food and nutrition insecurity continues to pose major challenges in Timor-Leste. Conflicting policies that discourage farmers to increase food production, insufficient public investment in the subsectors with high growth potential and underdeveloped investment climate to attract private capitals are some of the key underlying reasons for this situation.

Food availability and access

Limited reliable data on crop, livestock and fish production makes it difficult to assess the Timor-Leste's capacity for food self-sufficiency. Lack of data on subsistence production and use of indigenous food sources means that an important part of the country's food supply is poorly accounted for. There is no consistent data on staple food production. Nevertheless, estimates indicate that overall trends in staple food production since 2005 are at best stable. Currently, approximately 40 percent of cereal consumption is met by imports. With population growth estimated to be over 2.4 percent per annum, it is unlikely that Timor-Leste can achieve the SDP goal of self-sufficiency in staple food by 2020.¹

Understanding the socio-cultural reasons for food and nutrition insecurity is useful in formulating policy measures to improve health and nutrition status of poor and vulnerable people.

Food security is frequently discussed in parallel with national food self-sufficiency – i.e. meeting consumption needs, particularly for staple food crops, from own production. But food security and food self-sufficiency are not synonymous. A country can achieve food and nutrition security by importing sufficient amount of safe and nutritious food when certain conditions are met. Timor-Leste has an open and liberal trade policy regime. Net food trade, together with domestic food production and stock levels and food loss/waste rate, becomes an important factor in achieving the national food and nutrition security.

Inflation in Timor-Leste was 3.3 percent in 2013. The rate was as high as 13.5 percent in 2011 and 11.8 percent in 2012 in response to the rise in global commodity prices in 2010.² Food comprises about 60 percent of the consumer price index basket. Prices of imported food affect the inflation in Timor-Leste. In rural areas food from the capital and other regions is subject to higher prices because of transportation costs. Food price inflation adds further pressure to the already-weak purchasing power of poor households. A recent Asian Development Bank (ADB) study estimates that a 10 percent rise in food prices in Timor-Leste could increase

¹ FAO/GIEWS Timor-Leste Cereal Balance Sheet.

² Data from World Bank

poverty incidence by 2.25 percent.³ The 2011 Timor-Leste Household Income and Expenditure Survey (TLHIES) reported that median per capita monthly income was US\$40, indicating that half of the population lived on less than this amount. The survey also found that around 40 percent of household income was used for purchasing food. For many rural households, subsistence production remains a primary source of the family's food consumption.

The Government has introduced a broad range of social protection programmes. Examples include a conditional cash transfer programme directed to female-headed poor households who send their children to school and health clinics. Cash transfers were also provided to the poor households, elderly people, people with disabilities, vulnerable children and veterans of the resistance and their survivors. School feeding, cash-for-work, rice importation and subsidy programmes, and a civil service pensions are also in place. As a result, roughly one-tenth of the population is receiving some form of social support. Undoubtedly these programmes have increased food access by many individuals and households and thus play an important role in improving food and nutrition security. A significant challenge, however, is appropriately focusing on target populations and efficiently implementing these programmes. It is very important that the social protection programmes do not provide disincentives to economic activities, in particular food production. The government needs to improve the design and delivery of the social protection programmes. This includes, targeting beneficiaries, applying appropriate conditionality and reducing the transaction cost to deliver the programmes. Linking food security programmes (e.g. food coupon and cash transfer) with health and nutrition interventions is also important.

Stability of food supply

Food shortages and household food insecurity are particularly severe during the periods of October to March and especially in upland areas. Subsistence farmers and female-headed households are the most food insecure groups⁴. With over 100,000 families estimated to have insufficient food for a substantial period of time each year, Timor-Leste needs to increase the availability of nutritious food throughout the country. There is much scope for increasing domestic production of nutritious food through diversification and productivity growth. Stability of food supply can be improved through the improvement of market infrastructure and system. Imports continue to bridge the gap between the domestic food supply and demand. Existing food reserve system can be reviewed for possible improvement.

Timor-Leste continues to face significant challenges in managing increased environmental and natural resources degradation. As a natural resource based economy heavily reliant on agriculture, these challenges pose serious risks to sustainable economic development and food and nutrition security.

The Timor-Leste Constitution enshrines the conservation and protection of natural resources and aims to safeguard all natural resources for sustainable development and human prosperity. Timor-Leste has ratified the three Rio Conventions, namely the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). To translate these conventions into national actions, the Government has produced three strategies and Action Plans, namely, the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) on Climate Change approved in 2010, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and the National Action Plan for Sustainable Land Management, both awaiting approval of the Council of Ministers.

The NAPA identifies the agriculture and water sectors as most vulnerable to climate change posing significant risks to the key development indicators, in particular those related to food security. The main concerns include changes in rainfall and temperature patterns and their effects on drought, flooding and landslides.

³ Asian Development Bank, *Global Food Inflation and Developing Asia* (March 2011).

⁴ World Food Programme, *Timor-Leste Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA)* (2006), p11.

Sustainable management of the environment and natural resources and building resilience to climate change and natural disasters are fundamental for achieving food and nutrition security in Timor-Leste.

Food Utilisation and Nutrition

The 2005 Food Security Policy recognised the close relations between food insecurity and malnutrition. While hunger and malnutrition are the underlying causes of food insecurity, other factors, such as diseases, poor health and child care, lack of safe water and improved sanitation, hygiene and housing also affect food insecurity. Underdeveloped infrastructure undermines the food and nutrition status in rural areas: the 2010 Census reveals that just 57 percent of people in rural areas have access to drinking water from an improved source, 25 percent have access to basic sanitation, and an estimated 80 percent of the country's rural roads network is in a poor condition hindering the access to health facilities and market to sell/buy foods. The food and nutrition insecurity is also caused by a general lack of knowledge on good nutrition at a household level. Cultural beliefs and taboos surrounding feeding practices are also a factor.

The country has continued to introduce evidence-based nutrition interventions through the Health Sector's Strategic Plans. These interventions include actions aimed at the changes in nutrition behaviours and improved breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding practices. Community management of acute malnutrition has been scaled up through the nationwide supplementary and therapeutic feeding programmes and training of family health promoters on nutrition. The nutrition programme is now well established and has made progress in coverage.

While the nutrition situation of the country overall remains poor, preliminary data from a 2013 nationwide Timor-Leste Food and Nutrition Survey (TLFNS) indicate some improvement in basic nutrition indicators.⁵ Levels of stunting, wasting and underweight in children under five years of age all showed improvement over earlier statistics collected in the 2003 and 2009/10 Timor-Leste Demographic Health Surveys (TLDHS). Compared to 2009/10 TLDHS statistics, the current level of stunting is estimated at 50.2 percent, wasting at 11.0 percent and underweight at 37.7 percent, down from 58.1 percent, 18.6 percent and 44.7 percent, respectively. This is an encouraging sign, but leaves no room for complacency, particularly as the direct determining factors responsible for the improvements have not yet been established. Children living in rural areas are still among the most malnourished in the world, maternal mortality rates are the highest in the South East Asia region and an estimated 38 percent of children under the age of five years and one third of all women suffer from anaemia (iron deficiency). Furthermore, while higher levels of malnutrition are evident among poorer households, richer households with less food access problems, also experience relatively high levels of malnutrition (TLDHS 2009/10 reported 47 percent of children in households from highest income quintile were stunted). The continuing high level of malnutrition in the country remains a serious development challenge draining the nation's resources and negatively impacting the development of human capital and economic prosperity.

Typical Timorese diet consists of frequent consumption of rice, maize, wheat flour/bread, vegetables, oil/butter, sugar and salt. Occasional consumption of cassava and pulses/lentils is also observed. There is very little consumption of fruit, animal products, or other grains.⁶ Ensuring the diversity in production and consumption of locally-produced nutritious foods is important in improving household nutritional status. Timorese people need to increase not only carbohydrate (calorie) but also protein and micronutrient intake. Inadequate intake of calories, proteins and fats often lead to under nutrition (stunting, wasting, and underweight) among children under five and chronic energy deficiency (low Body-Mass-Index) among women of reproductive age. A significant lack of dietary diversity leads to micronutrient deficiencies. The

⁵ Preliminary findings of Timor-Leste Food and Nutrition Survey 2013 (April 2014).

⁶ World Food Programme, *Timor-Leste Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA)* (2006), p46.

most serious deficiencies relate to the low intake of iron, folic acid, iodine and zinc, which are especially significant public health problems among children under five and women of reproductive age.

Exclusive breast-feeding, continuing breast-feeding beyond two years and timely and appropriate complementary feeding are essential in ensuring adequate nutrition during infancy and early childhood. The exclusive breastfeeding rate among infants 0-6months showed improvement from 51.5 percent (TLDHS 2009-2010) to 62.3 percent (TLFNS). However, the practice of appropriate complementary feeding among infants and young children 6-23months old is still very sub-optimal. The TLFNS found that only 17.6 percent of infants and young children met minimum acceptable diet. The TLFNS 2013 also found that only 24.3 percent children 6-23 months consumed animal source food (meat), 22.5 percent consumed eggs, and 67.1 percent consumed vitamin-A rich foods. Thus, in general, protein intake and micronutrient intake is relatively low compared to the global average which signals the need to increase availability and access to nutrient dense/protein and micronutrient rich foods such meat, fish, and legume pulses. Clearly, enlargement of the nutritious food basket in addition to increasing staple food production is needed to improve the food and nutrition situation in Timor-Leste.

4. List of Key Policy and Strategy Documents Relevant to Food and Nutrition Security in Timor-Leste

ASEAN (2009) Integrated Food Security Framework and Strategy Plan for the ASEAN Region 2009-2013.

Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (2002) Timor-Leste Constitution, Dili, 20 May 2002.

Comoro Declaration (2010) Putting an end to Hunger and Malnutrition, Inter-Ministerial Declaration, Dili, Timor-Leste, 18th October 2010.

Community of Portuguese Language Countries (2011) CLPC Food Security and Nutrition Strategy, July 2011.

Government of RDTL (2007) National Youth Policy of Timor-Leste, Secretariat of Youth and Sport.

Government of RDTL (2009) Ministry of Social Solidarity Long-Term Strategy Plan, 2011-2030, July 2009.

Government of RDTL (2010) From Conflict to Prosperity: Timor-Leste's Strategic Development Plan 2011–2030, Office of the Prime Minister, Dili, Timor-Leste.

Government of RDTL (2010) Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Strategic Programme for Promoting Agricultural Growth and Sustainable Food Security in Timor-Leste, Dili, March 2010.

Government of RDTL (2010) Draft Environment Strategy Plan, 2010-2030, Ministry of Economic and Development Secretariat of State for the Environment, National Directorate for the Environment and National Directorate for International Environment Affairs, Dili, June 2010.

Government of RDTL (2010) National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) on Climate Change.

Government of RDTL (2012) National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

Government of RDTL (2012) The Programme of the Fifth Constitutional Government, 2012-2017 Legislature, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Dili, 26 August 2012.

Government of RDTL (2013) Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan, 2014-2020, National Directorate of Policy and Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Dili, September 2012.

Government of RDTL (2013) Agriculture Sector Development Medium Term Operational Plan, 2014-2018, National Directorate of Policy and Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Dili, May 2013.

Government of RDTL (2013) Agriculture Sector Development Medium Term Investment Plan, 2014-2018, National Directorate of Policy and Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Dili, May 2013.

Government of RDTL (2013) Manual of the Programme of School Feeding, National Directorate of Action Social School, Dili, May 2013.

Ministry of Health (2013) Draft National Nutrition Strategy 2013-2018, Ministry of Health, Timor-Leste.

5. List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CSI	Coping Strategies Index
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFNSC	District Food and Nutrition Security Committee
DRMP	Disaster Risk Management Policy
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FNSWG	Food and Nutrition Security Working Group
FNSP	Food and Nutrition Security Policy
GIEWS	Global Information and Early Warning System
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IDA	Iron Deficiency Anemia
IAAKSTD	International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KONSSANTIL	National Council on Food Security, Sovereignty and Nutrition
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
MCIE	Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Environment
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Ministry of Health
MPW	Ministry of Public Works
MSS	Ministry of Social Solidarity
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action on Climate Change
NDMD	National Disaster Management Directorate
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIEWS	National Information and Early Warning System
PDD	Programme for Decentralised Development
PNDS	National Programme for Village Development
PTS	Permanent Technical Secretariat
SDP	Strategic Development Plan (Timor-Leste National)
SLS	Survey of Living Standards
SLMS	Suco-Level Food Security Monitoring System
TLDHS	Timor-Leste Demographic Health Survey
TLFNS	Timor-Leste Food and Nutrition Survey
TLHIES	Timor-Leste Household Income and Expenditure Survey
TLNSS	Timor-Leste National Nutrition Strategy
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation