THE NATIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT

PARLAMENTO FOINSA’E NIAN
Situation of adolescents and young people in Timor-Leste

- **Youth bulge**: Young people represent 34% of the adult population.

- **Increasing**: Their numbers are increasing both in percentage and in absolute numbers.

- **Migrating**: They are increasingly migrating, mainly to the capital - (2010 Census).

- **Marriage**: They marry young (at 21 for girls and 25 for boys) and have children young (at 22.4 on average) - (2010 DHS).
Young people’s unemployment rate is high (70% of job seekers are young people 15-29)

60% of young people are enrolled in secondary school, showing an increase from 39% in 2006

20% of young people (15-24) are still illiterate, down from 27% in 2004

24% of young people (15-24) are Neet, neither at school nor at work
According to the Section 19º of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste:

“1. The State shall promote and encourage youth initiatives towards the consolidation of national unity, reconstruction, defense and development of the Country.

2. The State shall promote education, health and vocational training for the Youth.”
The National Youth Policy was approved by the Council of Ministers of Timor-Leste in November 2007, and in this moment is being reviewed to be adapted to the new circumstances of the Country.

The National Youth Policy aims to integrate vision of Timor-Leste’s struggle for independence into strategies for transforming the society.

The National Youth Policy highlights the importance of promoting civic and democratic values among Youth and the need of making Young People aware of their Rights as well as of their Duties as Citizens.

The National Youth Policy states that the Government will establish a National Youth Fund for Young People as a especial resource to finance initiatives of of Youth groups and associations to undertake activities geared to achieve a range of objectives.

The Secretariat of State for Youth and Sports (SSYS) is the leading Government Institution responsible for the development and welfare of Youth in the Country.
Established by the Resolution of the Government number 23, of 28 November 2009, the “Parlamento Foinsa’e Nian” was created as a space to learn and rehearse Democracy, as a culture of debate and discussion, and as a way to participate in public life, aiming to be a permanent and politically independent institution.

The Youth Parliament aims to make Young Parliamentarians to identify and discuss the problems of the Timorese Society, improving their understanding on the problems faced by the State and the Timorese People.

In order to do so, many questions and situations are introduced to and voted by the members of the Youth Parliament.
The Youth Parliament: Achievements

- Composition: 130 youth Parliamentarians, from 12 to 17 years old, one boy and one girl representing each sub-district of the country, for a mandate of 2 years.

- Achievements (3 years of activities):
  - Capacity building and training of Youth Parliamentarians (leadership, citizenship, and environmental issues, public speaking, debate, basic planning and organizational management; study tours to Australia, Indonesia and Spain; representing TL’s young people in conferences nationally and abroad)
  - Plenary seatings, discussing young people issues and making recommendations, passing resolutions, advocating with Government and Parliament
  - Youth-Led Campaigns and Initiatives, sensitizing young people on relevant issues
Lessons learned so far and future activities:

- Selection process should be more democratic and transparent
- More interaction between representatives and constituencies is needed to strengthen accountability → Youth Parliamentarians should consult young people who elected them, advocate for their rights/needs with policy makers, and report back to them
- The Youth Parliament Initiative should benefit all young people → Youth Parliamentarians should be able to organize activities in their constituencies to directly benefit young people
In order to improve the selection process of the new Parliamentarians (based on lessons learned), the Secretary of State for Youth and Sport approved a new temporary Statute, drafted by the Secretariat together with UNICEF and the National Youth Council, to regulate and improve the mechanism to select the new members to the National Youth Parliament.

This improved mechanism, already tested with good results in the second mandate selection process (July-August 2013) consists of two stages:

- In the First stage, the candidates go on “campaign” to the schools of their villages, being the young people the ones electing the boy and the girl who will represent them and their village in the second stage;

- In the Second stage, the elected candidates face a test in front of a board of examiners;

- The best qualified candidates in both parts of the election process will be designated as Youth Parliamentarians for the period 2013-2015.
Special representatives of the Disabled

- The new Statute also establishes that two special representatives of the disabled (one boy and one girl) would be selected and designated as Special Youth Parliamentarians.

- These Special Representatives would be selected in a parallel process consisting on the same stages than the non-special Parliamentarians.

- The last selection process showed the compromise and engagement of the disabled collectivity with this initiative.
In order to continue the training and development of the former Youth Parliamentarians, the Alumnae network has been created with the support of the Secretariat of State for Youth and Sports.

The Alumnae will share their experiences with the new Youth Parliamentarians and will propose and implement their own initiatives.

The Secretariat of State has also promoted the concession of grants to the best former parliamentarians for them to continue their studies in Universities of Timor-Leste.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH
OBRIGADU BARAK