



SPOKESPERSON V CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



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Timor-Leste represented for the first time at the Winter Olympic Games

This Saturday when Yohan Goncalves Goutt speeds down a snow-covered mountain in the Men's Slalom event in Sochi he will enter the record books as the first Timorese athlete to compete at the Winter Olympic Games.

Yohan was born in France to a French father and Timorese mother and began skiing at a young age. Also beginning at a very young age was his desire to represent Timor-Leste at the Olympics. He credits his mother for giving him a love of Timorese culture and he regularly visits his friends and family in Timor-Leste when he is not training in much colder parts of the world.

On the 7th of February Yohan proudly carried the Timor-Leste flag into the Olympic Stadium at Sochi in Russia and fulfilled one of his greatest ambitions. In doing so he also sparked a worldwide interest in his mother's homeland.

The Prime Minister has written to 19 year-old Goncalves Goutt to wish him well on Saturday. He noted Yohan's "fierce determination to achieve in his sport and his deep respect for Timorese culture and family" and assured him that "with these two qualities you have carried yourself with dignity and honored Timor-Leste."

Four Timorese athletes competed under the Olympic Flag in the Summer Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000. Timor-Leste then competed for the first time under the Timorese Flag at the Summer Olympics in Athens in 2004 and returned with athletes to the Beijing games in 2008 and London games in 2012.

Spokesperson for the V Constitutional Government, Minister of State Agio Pereira noted "We commend Yohan for his commitment and his pride in Timor-Leste. His efforts, along with those of other athletes that represent Timor-Leste on the international stage, raise the profile of our country and increase interest and engagement. On behalf of the Government we wish him well for his event on Saturday and congratulate him for what he has already achieved." **ENDS**



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