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## MEDIA RELEASE

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Díli, Timor-Leste

### **Judge Maria Natércia Gusmão Pereira campaigning in New York for election to the International Criminal Court**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of July Judge Maria Natércia Gusmão Pereira was nominated by the Government as Timor-Leste's candidate for election to the International Criminal Court [ICC] based in the Hague. Since the 6<sup>th</sup> of August the Judge has been undertaking a demanding schedule of interviews and meetings in New York to apply for the role and lobby for votes.

The International Criminal Court was established in 1998 when 120 states adopted the Rome Statute. It is an independent international organization and "the first permanent, treaty based, international criminal court established to help end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community." Eighteen judges make up the Judicial Division and to be represented amongst them is an honour for the individual and a credit to the nominating country. Although Judge Natércia is very much Timor-Leste's candidate at this time, if elected her role is completely independent.

Born in Balibó, Judge Natércia Gusmão attended High School in Maliana and later, after winning a scholarship, studied for her Law Degree in Bali, Indonesia. She undertook further legal and language training in Lisbon, Portugal. In 2000 she was appointed as Timor-Leste's first Judge and joined with International Judges on the Special Panel for Serious Crimes convened in the District Court of Díli, a position in which she served till 2005. From 2007-2009 the Judge served as Acting Chairperson of the Court of Appeal. Her experience in judging cases involving homicide, illegal detention, torture, sexual violence and other crimes against humanity as well as expertise in negotiations conducted in a multilateral context give her an excellent background for inclusion to the ICC. She currently serves on the Court of Appeal in Díli.

Judge Natércia said she "was proud as a daughter of Timor-Leste to be a candidate and if elected would give her maximum to the role."

The Judge's campaign is to be elected in the Asia Pacific slot of the ICC which has one other candidate running. The 8<sup>th</sup> of December is the day when the 122 States who now subscribe to the Rome Statute cast their vote. If she wins the vote her role will last for 3 years and can extend to as much as 9 years.

Spokesperson for the Government, Agio Pereria noted "We congratulate Judge Natércia on her candidacy and efforts in New York. Regardless of the outcome of the vote she has been a fine ambassador for Timor-Leste in this process."**ENDS**



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