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Timor-Leste's 2015 Budget Debate begins in National Parliament

On Monday the Plenary debating the 2015 General State Budget of Timor-Leste began in National Parliament. The Prime Minister, His Excellency, Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão opened the session with a [Speech Presenting the 2015 Draft Budget Law](#).

He underlined from the outset that “fulfilling the State’s objectives, embedded in the Constitution of the Republic” the Government continues to be “committed to transforming Timor-Leste into an upper middle income country, with a prosperous, healthy and educated population.”

The 2015 State Budget is proposed to be \$1.57 Billion US, less than 5% larger than the amount allocated in 2014. Expenditure continues to be guided by the Strategic Development Plan of Timor-Leste, with “front loading” for priority infrastructure projects that in the medium and long term will make “an irreversible contribution towards economic growth.”

Strong trends continue to underpin Timor-Leste’s economy with steadily rising non-oil growth, now driven by an emerging private sector, and consistently rising domestic revenue. Growth in Timor-Leste is occurring at a time when global economic growth is slowing. The rate of inflation is currently low with low rates projected to continue into 2015.

The Prime Minister explained four guiding principles used in the formulation of the budget for next year. Firstly the budget had to follow a sustainable fiscal policy. Secondly the budget had to ensure that there is high quality sustainable economic growth that benefits all Timorese, from urban to rural areas. Thirdly the budget had to invest in quality infrastructure and qualified human resources to underpin economic growth, service delivery and the development of all productive sectors of the Nation. And lastly, the budget had to protect all Timorese, particularly the vulnerable and deserving who do not always directly benefit from economic growth.

Debate will continue in National Parliament over the next two weeks. Budget documents are posted on the website of the Ministry of Finance and the debate is broadcast on national radio and television. The plenary



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is expected to conclude on the 19th of December and the Budget Law will then be forwarded to the President of the Republic of Timor-Leste for promulgation.

The Prime Minister encouraged his parliamentary colleagues before concluding his presentation saying:

“Together, in this debate ... we can work constructively in order to overcome challenges and to do what we vowed to do when we were sworn-in: to defend the national interests, to protect the Timorese people and to honour the sacrifices made by those who dreamed of a free, sovereign and independent Timor-Leste.” **ENDS**

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