



SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



MEDIA RELEASE

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Passing of Tobacco Control Regime marks major step towards a healthier Timor-Leste

The Decree Law setting out the Tobacco Control Regime, approved by the Council of Ministers on the 24th of November 2015 and promulgated last week on the 2nd of June by the President of the Republic, marks a bold step to improve the health of the nation.

Tobacco consumption in Timor-Leste is currently amongst the highest in the world with 70% of men and 42% of youth in the age group of 13 – 15 years consuming tobacco products. In recent years the figures have been increasing. According to the World Health Organization tobacco kills 150 a day and 1.3 million people a year within the WHO South-East Asia Region alone. This includes people who have never used tobacco themselves, but were exposed to second hand and third hand tobacco effects.

Timor-Leste's Tobacco Control Regime implements the provisions of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control ratified by the National Parliament in December 2004. This landmark legislation seeks to ensure protection from involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke, regulate the contents of tobacco products, introduce mandatory labeling of packaging to improve awareness and promote health education, ban advertising and establish other measures to reduce both demand for and supply of tobacco products.

The legal articles to achieve the goals include the prohibition of smoking in all enclosed public spaces, workplaces and public transport, the setting of maximum tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide content for tobacco products, labeling and health warnings on packaging, prohibition of sales to people under the age of 17 years and in certain locations, the setting of a minimum package size and price, and the prohibition of all forms of advertising and promotion.

The law is not only a list of controls for tobacco users, producers and sellers. It also sets out responsibilities for Government, health care providers & schools to promote training and health education and to “contribute conditions favorable to the prevention and control of smoking.” The Ministry of Health in particular has responsibilities to offer support with diagnostic help, counseling, free smoking cessation plans and to facilitate the accessibility of tobacco dependence treatments. A National Council for Tobacco Control under the direct authority of the Prime Minister has been established which monitors the implementation of the law, advises Government, supports anti-smoking campaigns and submits reports to the National Parliament.

The law comes into force within 180 days of its publication.



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Spokesperson for the Sixth Constitutional Government, Minister of State Ágio Pereira noted “With the new Tobacco Control Regime Timor-Leste is taking a strong stance to deal with an impending health crisis that has the potential to rob thousands of our people of their health and indeed, their lives. The negative result of tobacco use is proven. If we talk about building the future and developing our nation we cannot ignore the widespread use of tobacco amongst our children. This new law will require some adjustment and its implantation will have some challenges. However, our consideration of the law and cooperation with it will be a landmark step in building a healthy future for our children and our Nation.”**ENDS**

