



SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



**MEDIA
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Number of elected female Suco Chiefs nearly doubles

Provisional results of the Community Leadership elections conducted in Timor-Leste on the 29th of October and the 13th of November, published on the 15th of November by the Ministry of State Administration and the National Directorate for Suco Administration, show that 21 women have been elected to the role of Suco Chief. This represents close to a doubling of women elected by their communities to this important role compared to 2009 when 11 women were elected.

The Government drafted the new Suco Law that regulated these elections to encourage the participation of women in community leadership roles, including as applicants for the role of Aldeia Chief and Suco Chief. Across the nation there were 319 female candidates who presented for the role of Suco Chief.

The Prime Minister, H.E. Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo welcomed the increase as a good beginning to what he hoped would be a growing trend. The Prime Minister has consistently stated that for accelerated and sustained development Timor-Leste needs to increase the participation of women in decision-making and leadership roles. Considering the total number of 442 Suco Chiefs, the ratio of representation, although nearly doubling, is still very low. Chiefs of the nations 2,225 Aldeia's were also elected.

Each Suco Council, the local decision making body, is comprised of the Suco Chief, the Aldeia Chiefs belonging to that Suco, a female delegate from each of the Suco's Aldeias, a male delegate from each of the Suco's Aldeias, a female youth representative of the Suco, a male youth representative of the Suco and a *'lian-na'in'*.

At the level of National Parliament, Timor-Leste has one of the highest percentages of female representation in the region with 39% of seats occupied by women.

Government Spokesperson, Minister of State Agio Pereira noted that "the recent elections have been conducted successfully in a calm and dignified way, with acceptance of the outcome of our democratic process. This gives us confidence as we head into the Presidential and Parliamentary elections in 2017. The Government welcomes the increase in women elected to the role of Suco Chief and congratulates all candidates that have been elected to positions of responsibility." **ENDS**



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