



SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



**MEDIA
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Timor-Leste granted observer status by the World Trade Organization

On the 7th of December the General Council of the World Trade Organization agreed to establish a Working Party on the Accession of Timor-Leste and granted Timor-Leste observer status. This allows attendance at meetings of the General Council and “as appropriate, meetings of other WTO bodies as observers” during the process of accession.

Minister of State, Coordinating Minister of Economic Affairs, and Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, H.E. Estanislau da Silva, thanked the General Council at the meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, saying that “WTO accession has been a major governance, institutional building, economic and foreign policy objective of the Government of Timor-Leste” and was a part of the Government’s program to accelerate growth and support economic diversification.

The Minister of State explained that enhancing access to markets and improving opportunities for trade is one part of the Government’s package of proactive policies “to attract and stimulate investment in the productive areas of the economy, such as agriculture, fisheries, tourism, light manufacturing and mining, besides downstream oil and gas; while improving economic infrastructure, and improving the business environment.”

The Government sees the accession to the WTO as a complementary process to Timor-Leste’s accession to ASEAN and as an important facilitator of economic participation in the region. The ASEAN statement to the General Council in Geneva said "ASEAN welcomes the application of Timor-Leste to accede to the WTO. ASEAN notes Timor-Leste’s commitment to the WTO accession process, and its efforts to undertake social and economic reforms to this end. ASEAN urges all members to support Timor-Leste in its accession process and its integration into a multilateral trading system."

Spokesperson, Minister of State Agio Pereira noted “the Government welcomes the decision of the General Council of the WTO and looks forward to engaging in accession negotiations in order to proceed to full membership”. **ENDS**



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