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Government reaffirms commitment on International Women's Day

On International Women's Day, the 8th of March, Prime Minister, H.E. Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo, delivered a message reaffirming the Government's commitment to gender equality and called on men and boys to "play a more active role in supporting and enabling women's social and economic empowerment."

The Prime Minister said that in Timor-Leste's transition to a more modern society "we must build a Timor-Leste where women and girls are not automatically expected to cook, wash and clean, to look after the children and older members of the family, before they are able to participate in public life."

Goal 5 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" by the year 2030, is a priority goal for the Government of Timor-Leste. Whilst significant steps have been taken there is still much to achieve.

With 38% of parliamentary seats occupied by women, Timor-Leste can be proud that it registers one of the world's highest percentages of Women's participation in Parliament. The Law against Domestic Violence was passed in 2010 and the National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence adopted in 2012. Last year Timor-Leste became only the third country in South East Asia to approve a National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security 2016-2020 based on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. In February the Government updated the National Action Plan Against Gender-Based Violence for the period 2017-2021, which invests in the prevention of gender-based violence, access to justice and the provision of multi-sector services for victims and includes coordination mechanisms to ensure effective implementation.

Celebrations of International Women's Day in Timor-Leste continued on the 9th of March when the Secretary of State for the Support and Socio-Economical Promotion of Women, H.E. Veneranda Lemos Martins and the Secretary of State for Arts and Culture H.E. Maria Isabel de Jesus Ximenes spoke at a special event featuring the participation of women from Baguia, in the municipality of Baucau.

The Prime Minister finished his International Women's day message explaining that by "having a more gender equal society, we will have a more productive Timor-Leste ready to face the challenges of nationhood" and encouraged all to participate in this transition saying "Together we can do it, One for All and All for One, women and girls, men and boys, making Timor-Leste a 50:50 nation by 2030."**ENDS**



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