



SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



MEDIA RELEASE

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Enactment of Land Law major step for Development

The enactment of the *Special Regime for the Ownership of Immovable Property* on the 1st of June by the President of the Republic, marks the realization of a major policy ambition of the Sixth Constitutional Government. The law, more commonly referred to as the 'Land Law' was highlighted in the [Government's Program](#) as "vital for ensuring peace, social and economic development and domestic and foreign investment."

An initial version of the law developed during the IV Constitutional Government was subsequently vetoed by then President H.E. Dr. José Ramos-Horta in 2012. In 2015 when the VI Constitutional Government was inaugurated, [Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo](#) stressed that the approval of the law was a priority because it was "vital for internal and external investment". He noted that "without this law, we may not be able to realise projects that are essential for creating employment."

After extensive dialogue and review the [Council of Ministers approved the draft law on the 29th of March 2016](#). In mid-2016 it was presented to National Parliament, who approved the law in generality and then, after considerable debate and scrutiny, unanimously approved the law in a final global vote on the 6th of February 2017.

The purpose of the law is to clarify the legal status of land ownership by bringing into effect the different dimensions of the right to private property provided for in the Constitution of Timor-Leste. Clarification of property rights is done through the recognition of prior property rights. In addition the law creates the figure of informal property rights and recognizes Community ownership.

Access to land is guaranteed in two ways. Firstly with the creation of the National Land Registry to allow the emergence of a safe and transparent real estate market, and secondly with the clarification of assets belonging to the State, enabling it to carry out a better management of its assets, which can be distributed to those who may not otherwise have access to land. The law provides criteria for the resolution of disputes and the principle of compensation where there is "duplicity of rights".

Spokesperson, Minister of State Agio Pereira, noted "the Government was determined to see this law presented, passed and promulgated before the end of its mandate. It is a great credit to all involved that this legislation, so necessary for Timor-Leste's ongoing development, has now been enacted." **ENDS**



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