

**The Secretary of State for the Council of Ministers and
Official Spokesperson for the Government of Timor-Leste
Ágio Pereira**



**January 30, 2010
Dili, Timor-Leste**

Timor-Leste Government's position on domestic help to Malaysia

The Government confirmed it did not support the current plans by 'employment agencies' to send 10,000 Timorese maids to Malaysia for employment as speculated in the media.

"While unemployment remains a challenge in Timor-Leste, it is critical that any overseas employment opportunities are regulated for the protection of our citizens. Domestic help is no different than any other profession which should be given the utmost of care, due diligence and oversight on a Governmental level", said Secretary of State Ágio Pereira.

"Training procedures for cultural awareness and language, protection measures such as safeguards in contracts, wages and conditions, and recourse for work place violations are all issues that would need to be firmly established on a Governmental level through The Secretariat for Vocational Training and Employment (SEFOPE) and the Council of Ministers before any such proposals would be considered for the professional engagement of Timorese overseas."

A current capacity building and wage generation pilot program is being conducted with Timorese workers in South Korea; with the first workers arriving in Seoul in October 2009 to begin work under a bilateral agreement between Timor-Leste and South Korea.

Prior to leaving for South Korea, the Timorese were given training including language, cultural and professional education to prepare for the employment engagement. The Government of Timor-Leste worked closely with the South Korean Government to regulate, monitor and prepare the Timorese for the program, a successful collaboration between both Governments and civil society.

Pereira closed by saying "We welcome employment opportunities offered to increase income generation and the expertise of our citizens, but any future like-minded programs would go through the same scrutiny and control mechanisms to ensure Timorese abroad would have the best possible conditions to ensure a positive working experience. As for policy priorities, the Government of Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão is, first and foremost, aiming at job creation in the country for all Timorese, to minimize the need to work overseas, except in circumstances where expertise acquired in their placement overseas is relevant to the national development of Timor-Leste." **ENDS**

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