



SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



**MEDIA
RELEASE**

Dili, 10 September, 2015

Timor-Leste taking concrete steps to curb tobacco use

On Monday the Health Ministers of the World Health Organization's (WHO) South-East Asia Region signed a declaration in Dili pledging to accelerate hard-hitting measures to reduce tobacco use. The Regional Director of WHO's South-East Asian Region noted that "Tobacco use in South-East Asia is alarmingly high, triggering major health and economic consequences."

Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo explained the pervasive nature of tobacco use in Timor-Leste saying "Timor-Leste has one of the highest tobacco consumption rates in the world with over 70% of Timorese men using tobacco." He went on to emphasize "This is a tragic and unacceptable figure for the type of prosperous nation we strive to become. Tobacco is present on our streets, it is in our homes, it is advertised on our kiosks and it is present in our schools."

Regarding the South-East Asian Region WHO says "We know tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable deaths." About half of smokers will die from tobacco related health problems.

This year the Government has taken concrete steps towards tobacco control and consumption in Timor-Leste. A national anti-tobacco campaign, including radio and television, has been rolled out to convey accurate information about the impact of smoking. In May an executive order was issued to all Government Ministries banning smoking in public places including public transportation. In June the Chair of the Civil Service Commission reinforced the prohibition of smoking in all public administration working environments.

Specific training has begun for the Timorese health professionals who will staff clinics that are now being set up to support smokers who are seeking to quit. The first is being established at the National Hospital in Díli, with others to come online throughout the territory.

A draft decree law which will establish the Tobacco Control Regime is now circulating within the Government for comments prior to being tabled at the Council of Ministers for approval. The law looks to include measures such as smoking bans in enclosed public places, workplaces and public transport, regulation of the contents of tobacco products, warnings placed on packaging, advertising bans, public education, prohibition of sale and use for children and youth, prohibition of the importation and marketing of certain tobacco products.



Ágio Pereira
+670 77045002
agio.pereira@cdm.gov.tl
govtlmedia@gmail.com
www.timor-leste.gov.tl

A strong legislative framework will be important to efforts, along with the educational and clinical support of the Ministry of Health to achieve the best health outcomes for the people of Timor-Leste.

The Spokesperson for the Sixth Constitutional Government, Minister of State H.E. Agio Pereira noted “The Government of Timor-Leste welcomes the strong statement coming out of the WHO Regional Committee regarding tobacco use. We recognize that this is an important issue that left unaddressed will undermine the health and wellbeing of our nation, impacting on our development. The good quality of life we dream of for our people calls us to promote healthy lifestyles and minimize harm. The Government is moving on this issue of tobacco use to foster a healthy Timor-Leste with a healthy future.” **ENDS**



Agio Pereira

+670 77045002

agio.pereira@cdm.gov.tl

govtlmedia@gmail.com

www.timor-leste.gov.tl