



SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



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Government actions support gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

On Tuesday at a meeting of the CPLP on Gender, Minister of State, Coordinator of Social Affairs and Minister of Education, H.E. António da Conceição, underlined the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls to the Sixth Constitutional Government. The Minister of State welcomed visiting Ministers and officials from the Community of Portuguese Language Countries and explained that for Timor-Leste gender equality and the economic empowerment of women and girls was a moral, democratic and economic imperative for “the society we want to build, a modern society, socially and economically developed.”

Minister of State Conceição noted that education was key to this kind of development and talked about programs established by Government for women and girls such as vocational training, access to credit for entrepreneurial initiatives, business mentoring and skill development for community leadership.

Timor-Leste’s Constitution provides that women and men are treated equally in all areas of life, guaranteeing the sharing of equal rights and obligations in economic, social, cultural, family and political life. In 2002 Timor-Leste joined and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women [CEDAW]. The Law against Domestic Violence was passed in 2010 and a National Action Plan on Gender-Based violence adopted in 2012.

Last month the Council of Ministers approved a National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security 2016-2020 based on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. Timor-Leste is the third country in South-East Asia to launch such a plan covering the four pillars of the resolution: women’s participation, prevention, protection and peacebuilding. The Ministry of the Interior, the Secretary of State for Support and Socio-Economic Promotion of Women and civil society organizations led the efforts to develop the plan with UN Women providing technical assistance.

Women’s participation was also central to the theme of last week’s National Conference on the “Progress and Challenges in the Participation of Women in Political Life and Elections”. When opening the conference, Prime Minister, H.E. Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo affirmed that “the active participation of women in places of power and political decision in our country” was “crucial to the progress and development of Timor-Leste” and noted the target of the new Sustainable Development Goals to “Ensure women’s full and effective



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

participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.”

While Timor-Leste can be proud that it currently registers one of the highest percentages of Women’s participation in Parliament in the world with 38% of parliamentary seats occupied by women, the Government recognises the importance of improving participation at all levels. The Government is currently supporting programs, such as “100% Hau Prontu” to encourage and prepare women for leadership, particularly with a view to increasing the number of female candidates standing for upcoming suco and municipal elections.

Spokesperson for the Sixth Constitutional Government, Minister of State Agio Pereira noted “the empowerment of women and girls through education and economic opportunity, and the active participation of women in political decision making for our country, is crucial to the development of Timor-Leste. The Government is committed to press on to achieve this goal. In this journey we are making good steps in the right direction.”**ENDS**



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govtlmedia@gmail.com

www.timor-leste.gov.tl