



SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

Dili, 30 December, 2016

2016, a Year of Action

As 2016 draws to a close the Government reflects on a year of action and looks forward to 2017 with commitment and confidence.

This year the Sixth Constitutional Government has remained focused on delivering the services, policy and legislation needed to fulfill its Program and continue Timor-Leste's development journey set out in the Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030.

The Government Program recognizes that “the true wealth of any nation is in the strength of its people” and that “maximizing the overall health, education and quality of life of the Timorese people is central to building a fair and progressive society.”

In 2016 the roll out of the Family Health Program has been an outstanding success with families interviewed across the nation and registration already fully completed in the municipality of Aileu. The Tobacco Control Regime, promulgated in June and lauded by the World Health Organization as “a path-breaking example for developing countries”, is now being implemented. In the field of education, 2016 saw the expansion of Secondary Technical-Vocational Education to enable more students gain technical skills that prepare them for the labor market.

The Government has continued to deliver on its program to encourage economic diversification by focusing on productive areas of the economy, building and improving essential economic infrastructure, and addressing industry, financing and trade constraints.

This year the Mining Code and Forestry Code were approved and the Draft Tourism Policy released for comment. Tourism came ‘online’, literally, with the launch of the Government’s website www.timorleste.tl and the development of an international marketing campaign.

In December Timor-Leste progressed in its candidature for membership of the World Trade Organization when it was granted observer status, prompting ASEAN to applaud “Timor-Leste’s commitment to the WTO accession process, and its efforts to undertake social and economic reforms to this end.”

In October the World Bank, who along with the Government stress the importance of developing our domestic economy and supporting economic diversification, reported that the Government’s “reform efforts are beginning to show results, with a pipeline of Foreign Direct Investment emerging” and said that “In 2016 and 2017, domestic growth is expected to continue in a similar range as the last two years, with growth forecast at 5.0 and 5.5 percent, respectively.”

Regarding this Foreign Direct Investment, the Heineken beverage plant based in Hera was completed on



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time with the first brew placed in fermentation tanks on the 20th of November and the TL Cement facility based in Baucau, which will produce cement clinker base for export and cement for domestic supply, is moving toward the construction phase.

In terms of international relations and foreign policy 2016 has been a milestone year. In October Timor-Leste transferred the Presidency of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries [CPLP] to Brazil after a successful role leading the organization since July 2014. The first ever Global Economic Forum of the CPLP was held in Dili in February bringing delegations from over 20 countries and presenting opportunities for CPLP countries to develop business in the Asia Pacific region. The process of Timor-Leste's accession to ASEAN continued with the consolidation of national readiness and participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum and other regional and global meetings. In August Timor-Leste also hosted the ASEAN Civil Society Conference / ASEAN People's Forum 2016.

This year the Government of Timor-Leste made important progress in its work to establish maritime boundaries with our neighbours Indonesia and Australia. During his official visit to Timor-Leste in January, the President of Indonesia, H.E. Mr. Joko Widodo, reaffirmed Indonesia's commitment to "accelerate the completion of border negotiations" with maritime boundary negotiations to initially focus on waters to the north of Timor-Leste and then move to the south.

In April the Government of Timor-Leste initiated a United Nations Compulsory Conciliation process with Australia to assist the resolution of maritime boundaries, and after overcoming jurisdictional challenges the process is now well underway with meetings in October being described as "very productive" and signaling that both parties "should aim to reach agreement within the timeframe of the conciliation process" to be concluded in September 2017.

Whilst many challenges remain for Timor-Leste, 2016 gave rise to a number of long-term reports that showed how far we have come and what we can be proud of achieving.

In September the World Economic Forum reported that our country had been ranked in the top ten countries to have made the most progress converting economic growth into wellbeing over the period 2006 to 2014. In October a major study published in the medical journal the Lancet and launched at the United Nations rated Timor-Leste as the most improved of 188 nations in the health-related Sustainable Development Goals index for the period 2000-2015.

Other reports are confirming that our people are healthier and living longer. The World Health Organization in 2014 rated Timor-Leste as one of the top six countries in the world for making the greatest progress in improving life expectancy between 1990 and 2012. The 1990 figure of 50 years had risen to 66 years by 2012 and according to the WHO, is now approaching 70 years in 2016.

These are significant achievements!

As 2017 approaches we are confident that with the General State Budget unanimously approved and promulgated, the recent experience of orderly local elections conducted across the nation, and our



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consistent and sustained environment of peace and stability, the upcoming 2017 Presidential and Parliamentary elections will be an overwhelming success.

Government Spokesperson, Minister of State Agio Pereira noted “the Government, ever conscious of its responsibilities to the people of Timor-Leste, has worked hard to deliver results based on its Program. This year has been marked by achievements which position the country well going into 2017. Whilst acknowledging there is always more to do, the Government takes this opportunity to congratulate all for their efforts to develop and build the nation and to reaffirm our confidence in the people of Timor-Leste and the future of our nation.” **ENDS**



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