



SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



**MEDIA
RELEASE**

Dili, 5 January, 2017

Government facilitates election participation of citizens living abroad

Ahead of the Presidential and Parliamentary elections to be held this year, the Government of Timor-Leste is facilitating the participation of Timorese citizens living abroad. Voter registration is being conducted up until the 17th of January in Lisbon [Portugal], Sydney and Darwin [Australia], so that Timorese citizens living overseas will have the opportunity to exercise their democratic rights in the 2017 election.

Speaking from Timor-Leste's Consulate in Sydney, Ambassador to Australia, H.E. Abel Guterres said that this was the first time the diaspora had been given the opportunity to register and vote in Timor-Leste's general election. In Darwin Consul General H.E. Francisco José Filipe reminded Timorese citizens that "to ensure you have the opportunity to vote whilst overseas you must first register as a voter" and noted that "the Consular registration is free." Timorese residents in Portugal, including many students, expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to register at the Embassy in Lisbon where a team from the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration led by Deputy Director Ms. Tulia de Andrade, have been facilitating voter registration.

The Ministry of State Administration, the National Electoral Commission and the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration, ran a national information campaign to encourage voter registration prior to the closing of domestic voter registration in Timor-Leste on the 23rd of December. The Constitution of Timor-Leste declares that 'every citizen over the age of seventeen has the right to vote.'

The Government will continue advising citizens about the electoral process in the weeks and months ahead.

Later this month the President of the Republic is expected to announce the date of the Presidential election. The date of the Parliamentary elections will be announced after the Presidential elections have been conducted.

Government Spokesperson, Minister of State Agio Pereira congratulated the Ministry of State Administration, the National Electoral Commission, the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration and the Consulates and Embassies in Portugal and Australia for their efforts. He said "this Government is pleased to be taking action in assisting Timorese abroad so that they are given the opportunity to exercise the democratic rights our people fought so hard to establish. We acknowledge their important and ongoing contribution to the Nation and welcome their participation in the upcoming election". **ENDS**



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